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THE
PURGATORY
OF
DANTE

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GEORGE G. COHEN
WITH
AN INTRODUCTION
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DANTE'S PURGATORY

PART II. THE EARTHLY PARADISE

(CANTOS XXVIII-XXXIII)

C. L. SHADWELL



THE
PURGATORY
OF
DANTE ALIGHIERI

PART II. THE EARTHLY PARADISE
(CANTOS XXVIII-XXXIII)

*AN EXPERIMENT IN
LITERAL VERSE TRANSLATION*

BY
CHARLES LANCELOT SHADWELL, D.C.L.
OF ORIEL COLLEGE, OXFORD,

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY
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THE time which has been spent upon the remaining six cantos of the *Purgatorio* has given me the opportunity of reconsidering the crude views expressed in the Preface to my earlier translation : and I owe a great debt to my friend, Mr. Earle, who, in his article on the *Vita Nuova* (*Quarterly Review*, July, 1896) and in the essay which he has allowed me to use as the introduction to this volume, has thrown a new light on the structure of the whole allegory of the *Commedia*.

Nothing could be further removed from Dante's conception of his work, than to regard the cantos treating of the Earthly Paradise as an episode distinct from the main plan. They find their best explanation, when they are considered as essential parts of the central allegory, of which

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the *Inferno* and *Purgatory* are subordinate though necessary illustrations.

But even such a statement as this must not be pressed too far. Dante's conception of representing in a figure the scheme of man's redemption is, in his own phrase, polysensuous. On one side, it classifies and exemplifies all human passions, all human aspirations and desires, all the hindrances and all the helps which delay or assist man in fulfilling the law of his being. The *Inferno* shows how each evil passion indulged in brings its own appropriate punishment: the *Purgatorio* shows by what painful discipline it may be subdued and eradicated. These lessons are not wholly new: they are a part of pagan morality: and they are illustrated from the teaching of pagan philosophers, and from the examples of pagan lives. Here it is appropriate that Virgil, the typical representative of unassisted human wisdom, should be the pilgrim's guide and teacher, the exponent of pagan morality.

But this ethical exposition is introduced as a part of the experience of a Christian's pilgrimage. As in the simple allegory of Bunyan, the passage from the death of sin to the life of righteousness proceeds under the direction of divine grace. The difficulties and dangers that beset the path, the City of Dis, the Slough of Despond, the Demons

of Malebolge, the Castle of Giant Despair, are only passed or overcome by the intervention of spiritual assistance, by reliance on the promises of Scripture, on the consolations of Catholic devotion. There are times when Virgil is at a loss, when human philosophy supplies no answer, when the pilgrim's courage fails, and when the only hope of escape lies in supernatural support. Whether by direct resort to the divine word, or by humble obedience to the teaching of the Church, man is enabled to face the obstacles that stand in his way, and by a strength not his own to proceed on his heavenward journey.

This conception of life as a pilgrimage is common to both the allegories. But in Dante's story it is made more vivid by the identification of the pilgrim with the narrator himself. He stamps upon the face of the *Commedia* a character of emphatic reality. The examples of sin, of holy life, of the life in which good and evil passions contend for the mastery, are not abstractions, but real men and women, many of whom the poet has himself known; and the central figure is himself, an actual figure in the politics of the day, whose name, whose country, whose career, is known to his contemporaries. To give this reality to the leading character in the allegory, the symbol of the Church's teaching, he has iden-

tified her with an earthly lady, who had in his own early life inspired him with the passionate devotion of a lover.

But beyond this threefold purpose, the ethical treatise, the exposition of the Christian life, the disclosure of the poet's own personal experience, the *Commedia* is intended to be a monument of Catholic doctrine, a *Summa Theologiae*. The *mater scientiarum* adopts and co-ordinates all human knowledge, moral and physical, and comprehends it under the scheme of God's government. The riddles of the Schools, the mysteries of nature, the problems of ethics, find their solution when read as parts of an universal order. Disquisitions in the *Paradiso*, which seem to us uninteresting and inappropriate, are nevertheless an integral part of Dante's design, a part of the promise made at the close of the *Vita Nuova*, to write of his lady something greater than had before been attempted by any one.

No one of these threads of the labyrinth can be left out of sight in following the course of the allegory: and it is Dante's sustained grasp of all of them that exhibits his marvellous constructive power. His words are charged with meaning that cannot be interpreted from a simple point of view; *ιδίαις ἐπιλύσεως οὐ γίνεται*.

It results from this understanding of the com-

plex purpose of the poem, that such a distinction as was crudely suggested in my earlier volume, between the last six cantos of the *Purgatory* and the rest of the *Commedia*, must be condemned as inadequate. Undoubtedly, the Earthly Paradise occupies a separate place in the poem: a new page is turned, a new chapter is begun. But it is not an episode, which can be omitted without loss to the whole structure; and I went too far when I called it an interruption of the allegory, a passage of personal interest only. I trust however that—

Quando scoppia della propria gota
L'accusa del peccato,

some mitigation of sentence will be accorded me in the court of criticism.

My error has at least had this fortunate result that it has led Mr. Earle to examine into the whole allegory of the Earthly Paradise, and to contribute to this volume an exhaustive explanation of its symbolism, for which I feel sure that all students of Dante will feel grateful.

Many, and for the most part friendly critics, have declared themselves not satisfied with the choice of Andrew Marvell's metre for the rendering of Dante's *terza rima*; and much of this criticism may be justified by the imperfection of

the specimen submitted by the present translator. But apart from these imperfections, of which no one is more sensible than myself, I still feel that some such transference into a vernacular home-grown medium is what is wanted to enable English readers to follow, without sense of effort, thoughts expressed in an unfamiliar diction. To render adequately into a deflexionized language, such as our own, a sentence constructed according to rules in which flexion still plays an important part, requires a transfer of emphasis, which it is difficult to achieve without a reconstruction of the whole framework. The task imposed in adapting the stanza of Dante to that of Marvell, compels the translator to reconstruct the form of expression, so as to bring out in terms intelligible to the English reader the force of the original, the points to which his attention should be directed. Every characteristic phrase, every variety of the vocabulary, should be preserved, but the result of the whole should be presented in a shape which will not require of the reader acquaintance with idioms not familiar to his own language. The story that Dante at first proposed to himself to write of Hell and Heaven in Latin Hexameters has probably no foundation ; but the legend serves to illustrate the problem before us. Dante could not have given his message to those of his own

time if he had allowed himself to be fettered by the trammels of an unfamiliar tongue. These are the reasons which have seemed, and still seem to me, to recommend the adoption of Marvell's metre. It preserves the arrangement of stanzas, a structural characteristic of the verse of the *Commedia*; but it reproduces it in a familiar English mode. In Marvell's hands, it has a wide compass: it is capable of ranging from the most direct and unadorned narrative to the discussion of subtle intellectual or political arguments; it wastes no words: it has Dante's restraint and compression: it has his dignity and simplicity. These considerations, which first suggested the experiment I have tried, have impressed me with still greater force during the time which has been given to the translation of the Earthly Paradise.

C. L. S.

FREWIN HALL, OXFORD.

July 1898.

INTRODUCTION

IN the former part of this translation Mr. Shadwell surprised his friends by closing his work at the end of the twenty-seventh Canto of the *Purgatorio*; and Mr. Walter Pater, speaking for himself and others, expressed his regret that he should have found reason to do so. To some extent I shared this feeling, and it awoke in me a special curiosity about these Six Cantos, from which I date the growth of a new interest, and the aim of a fascinating study. Up to that time they had been to me, as to many others, a part to skip, or to get over lightly. My estimate has undergone a wonderful change in the course of a few years.

The whole section is obscure by reason of its continuously symbolic nature, and rarely have the commentators done anything to relieve the darkness. On the other hand they have done much to intensify it, and to render the Ter-

restrial Paradise almost repulsive. Some critics have condemned the whole section, and one was explicit enough to say that in this part of his work the poet was unable to rise superior to the bad taste of his time. Such depreciatory criticism is in striking contrast with the peculiar interest manifested by the author in these Cantos, and his pointed efforts to focus attention upon their symbolism. Whatever we make of them, this one thing is quite certain, that in the poet's mind their relative importance was very high. I do not hesitate to assert my opinion, that for him these Six Cantos were the 'hub' of his great poem. Hither converge all the leading and pervading ideas, as the spokes of a wheel converge about the axle-tree. In these Cantos, more than anywhere else, is the chief motive of the poet to be sought. Here is the point of vantage for the student; from this position he can best apprehend the relations and proportions of the Whole.

The failure of the commentators is partly due to their disregard of continuity. Words, phrases, and sentences are explained severally, with little heed to the poet's drift, and any verse of Scripture or of liturgic formulary is deemed serviceable for the exposition if only it seem to have a verbal resemblance to the text to be explained. Such

is the source of that fundamental error, the chief bane of the current exegesis, which assumes the Grifphon to be a symbol of Christ. It will be shown in the sequel, that this false hypothesis has vitiated the interpretation at some of the most vital points. I shall here try the effect of a continuous commentary, and I mean to give free utterance to such suggestions as occur, not always allowing the fear of mistake to deter me, because I seek rather to offer thoughts for the consideration of others than to attain finality by my single effort.

The *Divina Commedia* is planned upon a three-fold division: *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, *Paradiso*. This division is conspicuous, and it might easily seem to be the sole and complete account of the poet's ground-plan, admitting neither addition nor modification. But this is only one of many instances in Dante, where an obvious meaning seems complete and all-sufficient, and yet upon closer scrutiny we may find that such meaning is not the whole meaning.

The *Commedia* has in fact two ground-plans, one based on the number Three, and the other on the number Four; and this circumstance furnishes our Six Cantos with a variability of aspect. In the tripartite scheme they appear as a

subordinate section of one of the Three members : but in the quadripartite scheme they constitute one entire member of the Four, namely, Hell, Purgatory, Earthly Paradise, Heavenly Paradise.

The Six Cantos of the Earthly Paradise are included in the *Purgatorio*, because in them the man already cleansed from the defilement is by the waters of Lethe purged also from the memory and consciousness of sin. But while there exists this inward and vital link between the penal region and the Earthly Paradise, the latter nevertheless asserts in the most unmistakable manner the character of a distinct and well-defined member of the Sacred Poem. The Six Cantos are separated from the foregoing by the greatest transition that has occurred hitherto. The transition from the murky air of the *Inferno* to the open sky was great, but it was mainly physical. The advance in the twenty-eighth Canto is indeed physical, but it is as a moral change that it makes the transition so decisive. This is strikingly intimated in the valedictory discharge from pupillage which is pronounced by Virgil at the close of the twenty-seventh Canto:—

At every step there seemed to grow
Desire upon desire, as though
 With wings I were arrayed,
 My upward flight to aid.

When all the stair we had o'errun,
And stood the topmost step upon,
 Then Virgil fixedly
 Fastened his eyes on me.
"Now hast thou looked, my son, on all
"The eternal flame, the temporal :
 "Now shalt thou pass before,
 "Where I can guide no more.
"So far my art hath led, my skill :
"Henceforth take guidance from thy will :
 "Now hast thou left behind
 "The steep road, the confined.
"Look on the Sun, resplendent o'er thee,
"The flowers, the trees that lie before thee,
 "The herbage green, that earth
 "Brings of herself to birth.
"Till those fair eyes shall meet thee glad,
"That weeping sent me to thy aid,
 "Here mayest thou sit, or rove
 "At large about the grove.
"No longer on my word abide,
"Nor look for sign from me to guide :
 "Now hast thou judgment found,
 "Free and upright and sound.
"Henceforth in thee it were offence,
"Not to be guided by thy sense :
 "Now o'er thyself I set
 "Mitre and coronet."

And to the greatness of this transition corresponds
a distinctness in the form of treatment, which
renders it structurally an independent member

of the poet's plan. These Six Cantos are found to be constituted as an organized division which has a system of its own and a unity in itself. The first of them is of the nature of a Prologue to the Earthly Paradise. In the second is placed an Invocation just as there is in the second Canto of the *Inferno*. The five Cantos introduced by the Prologue are symmetrically balanced, so that the critical event which is the turning-point of the action occurs in the central Canto of the five.

But there is something more to be said about the Six Cantos, as to their external form. It is pretty certain that Dante never finished off a work of art with the number Six. This number is the very symbol of incompleteness; it postulates and implies a Seventh. Thus in the fourth Canto of the *Inferno* our poet is received into fellowship with five chief poets, and he makes the sixth. But this imperfect number is not final; there is another member of the band, only he is gone before, and will be met with at an advanced stage of his journey in *Purgatorio* XXII. The front row of poets in the *Commedia* is completed by Statius, who makes the seventh. Thus in the *Vita Nuova*, which is based upon six visions, the promise of a Seventh is the theme of the Epilogue. In that case the reader had to look forward to the completing number, in our present inquiry we have

to look backward to it. In the *Commedia* number One stands first, and the Six are deferred. It is the first Canto of the whole poem which combines with our Six to make the number complete. It will readily be seen that these Seven Cantos are homogeneous in their symbolic nature, and that there is no other Canto of like nature in the whole poem. For those who are in touch with Dante the mere indication of this fact will suffice. However, some positive evidence of it will meet us on our way.

But I must not proceed without glancing at certain indications that the twenty-seven Cantos had a divisional unity in the poet's mind. From *Purgatorio* I. 66:—

Che purgan sè sotto la tua balia.

Who 'neath thy charge begin

To cleanse themselves from sin.

and line 82 of the same Canto:—

Lasciane andar per li tuoi sette regni:

Let us pass through thy kingdoms seven.

we gather that the province of Cato, his sevenfold realm, was conterminous with these twenty-seven Cantos, and that the upper frontier of his jurisdiction coincided with the termination of Virgil's authority.

The very number twenty-seven, as the threefold

multiple of Nine, may well be a symbol of completeness. And it seems to me that the poet has tacitly subdivided these twenty-seven Cantos into three groups of nine, and that he has rounded off each group with a sleep. For in the course of these Cantos Dante sleeps three times, and these three slumbers are described wholly or mainly in IX and XVIII and XXVII. The termination of the first division may be recognized in Canto IX, where Dante asleep is carried up to the Gate of Purgatory by Lucia, so that this division contains the Ante-Purgatorium:—the second in Canto XVIII, where Dante falls into a dreamy slumber, an incident which closes the fourth circle, dividing the seven circles into four and three:—the third termination is marked by that noble passage in which Virgil discharges Dante from pupillage at the close of Canto XXVII.

And to my apprehension there is yet another indication of the same thing. I fancy that the great invective against the people of the Val d'Arno was designedly placed in Canto XIV to stand as a centre-piece to these twenty-seven Cantos.

These preliminary observations may suffice to indicate the general relations of this section to the entire poem, and I now proceed to a continuous survey of the Six Cantos in their order.

When I say 'continuous' I do not mean that I shall notice every problematical point that arises—so far from it, I shall notice only those upon which I think I have something new and useful to say, and where my own opinion is firm enough to enable me to speak with some confidence of right. I shall not attempt to discuss every doubtful matter, but I shall hope to drive a main opening through an obscure region which may enable travellers the easier to explore right and left. The continuity I aim at is not a textual continuity, but a continuity to be attained by a vigilant attention to the drift of the poem.

THE FIRST CANTO OF THE EARTHLY PARADISE.

PURGATORIO XXVIII.

In the first Canto of the Earthly Paradise the pilgrim passes from toil, anxiety, and pain, to ease and enjoyment. This great transition is signalized by a complete change of scenery. From the rugged bare precipitous ascent we find ourselves all at once on level ground richly planted and wooded. A gentle and steady breeze moves the foliage of the trees enough to sway the boughs, but not enough to disturb the charm of birds singing and nesting in the branches.

CANTO
XXVIII.

For the first time since the opening of the Poem in that dreadful wood, the pilgrim is at length in the sixty-second Canto seen to be in a state of enjoyment. There is no pressure to get on, no hurry, but on the contrary an economized pace "lento lento," as if to retain and prolong the present taste of bliss. There is no conversation, the two companions follow the pilgrim in silence, and leave him to enjoy his own meditations.

Everything in this Canto is on the level of simple Nature. The enjoyment of the pilgrim, the pleasure awakened by each ordinary incident, is like the gladness of the child to whom every sight and every sound ministers pleasure. For the keynote of the Canto is Nature restored or rather regained in pristine purity. Hitherto, all that the pilgrim has passed through belongs to the altered condition of man by the loss of innocence, and now at last he recovers the level from which he had fallen by sin.

This natural joy is heightened by the sense of relief and deliverance. Whoever has known the severer forms of neuralgia, with its recurring intervals of ease, will remember the inexpressible sense of pleasure which is linked with the departure of acute pain. How in such intervals does every common object and incident seem to

touch us with lively pleasure! So in this Canto—
 with what unalloyed delight, with what affectionate
 observation, does the pilgrim notice common
 phenomena, the sun, the air, the leaves, the birds,
 the water and its tint, the tender blades of grass
 on the margent of the stream by which he marks
 the direction of the placid current!

CANTO
XXVIII.

In this delineation of the pilgrim's mood the
 poet has mingled a living touch of personal
 experience :—

Yea, but with full delight their song
 Welcomed the morning gale among
 The leaves, whose rustling chime
 Kept burden to their rime :
 Such burden gathers, bough on bough,
 When winds through Chiassi's pinewood blow,
 What time Sirocco first
 From Eolus hath burst.

XXVIII. 16-21.

The illustration is drawn from the poet's walks
 about Ravenna, where after years of vicissitude,
 chequered with rude hardships and mortifications,
 he at length found a home, and drew his family
 circle around him, under the security of powerful
 friends. He certainly had his two sons and his
 daughter Beatrice with him, and Mr. Vernon adds
 also his wife, Gemma Donati. This happened,
 according to Scartazzini, not later than 1317.

CANTO
XXVIII.

What parallel can life afford, more apt than this, to the poetic situation of the present Canto?

In this happy frame of innocent susceptibility the pilgrim is surprised by a new pleasure in the appearance of a Fair Lady across the stream, walking and singing and gathering of the flowers that grew along her path. The sudden burst of that object upon his view awoke a pleasure which eclipsed all other pleasures, and the pilgrim's thoughts readily turned to thoughts of love, and—what surprises the reader who has not caught the special qualities of the scene—he accosts her with talk and allusions of love. This freedom marks the state of pure innocence.

Of the same complexion is her response and compliance, which though in a manner coy, is given in full and even overflowing measure. Only there is this difference, that she is on her guard against misconception, and offers a hint of explanation for her gracious smiles. This is a check to the reader, who might else have thought that we had left all *that* behind. The lesson of the incident is this—that he has not yet come to that state where they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. The Fair Lady's explanation is conveyed through a single word—*Delectasti*—of a familiar psalm, which carries the sense that her

ready smiles spring from the exuberance of her joy in the fair creation of God. And here she only puts into words what has been passing through him in thought or emotion. CANTO
XXVIII.

In all things she answers to him and he to her. He had walked slowly, "lento lento." The pettiness of her paces is set off by a pretty simile:—

As in the ball one turns her round,
Her steps close planted on the ground,
And scarcely doth she set
Each before each her feet,
So on the flowers turned she, that there
Of scarlet and of yellow were,
Bent down the while her eyes
In seemly maiden-wise.

XXVIII. 52-57.

He had been tasting a silent joy in the fair things around him, she gave it voice with her *Delectasti*, both in singing and discourse. He had praised her beauty and touched a note of love; and to this she had at first only responded by tacitly according the request enfolded in that fond rhetoric, but presently, when the theme afforded a fair opening, she distantly intimated her pleased acceptance of "onesto riso e dolce gioco."

This Fair Lady is differentiated from all other personages in the *Commedia*, by the fact that

CANTO
XXVIII.

she is not introduced, and does not introduce herself. Once indeed, when we are seeing the last of her, we hear Beatrice (casually as it were) call her Matilda; and this will demand some notice when we reach that part in the narrative.

In fact, this Fair Lady is not any one particular person at all; she is not a woman but Woman. And this will afford the first clue to the part assigned her. As in the history of the Fall the persuasion of Eve had seconded the wiles of the tempter, and seduced Adam from duty, so reversely, in this Eden Regained, Woman is instrumental in promoting the cause of man's happiness and edification. But in order to her fulfilling this womanly office well, it is not enough that she be lovely and amiable and engaging, she must also be wise.

The character of the Fair Lady is not simple, but composite. Besides being Woman, she is also Wisdom. She knows the secrets of Creation:—

“Quando praeeparabat caelos, aderam : quando certa lege et gyro vallabat abyssos : quando aethera firmabat sursum, et librabat fontes aquarum ; quando circumdabat mari terminum suum, et legem ponebat aquis, ne transirent fines suos ; quando appendebat fundamenta terrae ; cum eo eram, cuncta componens, et *delectabar* per singulos dies, ludens coram eo omni tempore ;

ludens in orbe terrarum, et deliciae meae esse cum filiis hominum. Nunc ergo, filii, audite me; Beati qui custodiunt vias meas. . . . Qui me invenerit, inveniet vitam, et hauriet salutem a Domino.”—Proverbs viii.

CANTO
XXVIII.

Such is the Fair Lady who takes up the direction of the pilgrim after Virgil has acquitted himself of that office, and discharged him from pupillage. To her beauty and kindness and wisdom he yields unquestioning obedience, and his judgment is sound. She is the handmaid and precursor of Beatrice.

This Canto is the Prologue to the Section. Its function is to convey a just appreciation of the nature of the Earthly Paradise, and to indicate its relation to the general history of mankind. It is the Paradise of the Hebrew Scriptures; but this sacred tradition was not confined to one race of men, it was inherited also by the Greeks; and when their ancient poets sang of the Golden Age, it was this Earthly Paradise of which they dreamed. With a resolute consistency which is unmistakeable Dante unites the testimony of the heathen world with that of Scripture, as if he would break down that rigid distinction between “sacred and profane” in literature. Thus in Purgatory the virtues and vices are so illustrated that sacred and profane examples alternate or nearly so. This he does

CANTO
XXVIII. constantly; but there is no one passage so fit as this to be considered as the palmry text of this leading idea.

“The poets who discoursed of old

“The happy state, its age of gold,

“In their Parnassus seem

“Even of this place to dream.

“Here sinless grew our human root;

“Here spring time stays, and every fruit:

“The very nectar this

“Of which they fabled is.”

XXVIII. 139-144.

“Nettare è questo.” Here is a pronoun without antecedent: there is no noun to which “questo” refers back. It refers to the thought which underlies the whole Canto; the construction is *πρὸς τὸ σημαίνόμενον*, as the Scholiasts call it. It is the State of Innocence which is the nectar of life, and the name of it has descended as a tradition from the golden age, though now it is only a name, and poets’ talk. The scene ends with this super-grammatical stroke, and its graceful finale. From it a light of allegory is flung back over the whole Canto.

THE SECOND CANTO OF THE
EARTHLY PARADISE.

PURGATORIO XXIX.

Pleasures increase, and so does also the desire of the pilgrim for more. The lady sings like one enamoured *Blessed are they whose sins are covered*, and he walks on his bank as she on hers, keeping even pace with her tiny steps. Moving up stream, they come to a bend in the course of the rivulet, which has the effect of restoring that eastward direction from which the pilgrim had been diverted when he subordinated his movement to that of the Fair Lady. Presently she addresses him as Brother, bidding him look and listen.

A brilliant and startling light, as it were lightning, save that it was persistent and increasing in brilliancy, awoke in him intense curiosity. The illumined air and the sweet melody exalt his mood to a state of rapture, and yet he feels desire for greater joys. Meanwhile the light has grown bright as fire among the green boughs, and the sound of the chant has become intelligible.

Here the narrative is interrupted for an Invocation, occupying two tercets, which contains indications that are important for our inquiry.

CANTO
XXIX.

O sacrosante Vergini, se fami,
 Freddi, o vigilie mai per voi sofferisi,
 Cagion mi sprona, ch' io mercè ne chiami.
 Or convien ch' Elicona per me versi,
 Ed Uranía m' aiuti col suo coro,
 Forti cose a pensar mettere in versi.

XXIX. 37-42.

This Invocation requires fuller consideration than we can give in this place, and we shall return to it below.

To the distant view there appeared as it were seven trees of gold, but on their nearer approach they proved to be Candelabra, and in the chanting voices was heard HOSANNA. The lustre was beyond that of the Moon at her brightest. Marvelling at the sight, Dante turned round and exchanged glances with Virgil, whose look bespoke amazement equal to his own.

Flamed o'er us that fair panoply,
 Clearer than when in cloudless sky
 Shineth the moon most bright
 In mid month at mid night.
 I turned aside with wonder filled
 To my good Virgil, and beheld
 His face with awe impressed,
 That no less load confessed.

XXIX. 52-57.

The Fair Lady admonished him, not to be so absorbed in the living lights, as to miss that which

follows them. Then he saw that after the lights, which moved as if they were leaders, came people clad in dazzling white. The light of the seven Candelabra streamed far in their wake, forming seven several bands, corresponding respectively to the seven colours of the rainbow. Indeed we may say that the decoration of this Canto is Light and Colour, as that of the preceding one was Trees and Flowers.

CANTO
XXIX.

Under this rainbow awning came four-and-twenty elders crowned with garlands of white lilies. They sang together: *Blessed art thou among the daughters of Adam, and blessed be thy charms for evermore.* When these had passed on, there came moving into their place a new group of the procession, consisting of four beasts with wings as described in the Apocalypse, and these were crowned with green leaves. In the space between the four beasts came a triumphal Car on two wheels, drawn by a Griphon. The two wings of the Griphon passed up through the rainbow bands of the awning in such a manner that they enclosed the central line between them, but broke not the continuity of any, and they shot up high in air further than eye could reach. The bird-like parts of the monster were golden, but the other parts were white tricked with vermeil. It were little to say that Rome never gladdened

CANTO
XXIX.

Scipio or even Augustus with a triumphal Car so splendid, for indeed the chariot of the Sun were a poor thing beside it. Off the right wheel three Nymphs moved on in a circling dance, one of them so Red that in fire she would scarce be visible, one so Green that she seemed of emerald all through, the third as White as driven snow. Off the left wheel were four Nymphs dancing, who all followed the measure of One with three eyes in her forehead. After this group came two old men, alike dignified, but equipped unlike: one seemed a physician, the other bore a sword so glittering keen that it sent a shudder through the pilgrim on the opposite bank. Next came four in lowly guise; and last of all an old man, who came along sleeping with a shrewd look on his face. These seven were in white like the foremost band, only instead of lilies they wore roses and other red flowers upon their heads, insomuch that to the distant view they seemed above their eyebrows all aflame.

Just when the Car was over-against the pilgrim, there was a sound of thunder, and the whole procession came to a halt. Thus ends the Second Canto of the Earthly Paradise.

Before we pass on to the next Canto, we must pause to consider these five points: First, the

Invocation: Second, the Colours: Third, the
 Griphon: Fourth, the Car: Fifth, the relation
 of the Procession to the Pilgrim.

CANTO
 XXIX.

I. THE INVOCATION.

If there were not something very peculiar about this Invocation, we should not be entitled to base any argument upon it, further than this, that the presence of an invocation in this place gives to these Cantos the character of a substantive division of the *Commedia*. For a fuller appreciation of its significance, we must compare it with the other invocations in the Poem, and this will require some space. The following tabulation shows the distribution and the proportions of all the invocations:—

				Tercets		Lines
(1)	<i>Inferno</i>	II. 7-9	. . .	1	. . .	3
(2)		XXXII. 10-12	. . .	1	. . .	3
(3)	<i>Purgatorio</i>	I. 7-12	. . .	2	. . .	6
(4)		XXIX. 37-42	. . .	2	. . .	6
(5)	<i>Paradiso</i>	I. 13-36	. . .	8	. . .	24
(6)		XVIII. 82-87	. . .	2	. . .	6
(7)		XXXIII. 67-75	. . .	3	. . .	9

If the series had stopped with the fifth invocation where a line is drawn, there would have been a conspicuous numerical symmetry, the *Purgatorio*

CANTO
XXIX.

showing twice the quantity of the *Inferno*, and the *Paradiso* twice that of the *Purgatorio*. By the addition of a sixth invocation, this studied and progressional symmetry is broken, and though another starts up in its place, namely that of two invocations to each Cantica, this is too trivial and insignificant to have been the motive of the change. The motive plainly was to reach the number Six in conventional invocations, in order to dignify the serious Invocation by installing it in the Seventh place.

Here we seem to find traces of after-thought. It looks as if the poet, following precedent and doing as poets do, to whom he says "multa invocatione opus est" (*Epistola* X. 18), had finally and somewhat perfunctorily dispatched this claim with that long tirade in *Paradiso* I. 13-36, and then afterwards bethought him of a devout and lofty Invocation, at a time when the earlier part of the *Paradiso* had received its mature form, and when the restoration of a numerical symmetry of lines was not motive enough for the pains of rearrangement. Most of the invocations strike me as conventional and perfunctory, and even at places to have something of the nature of parody upon the ancient poets. Indeed, of the six invocations, there are only two in which I can discover any hint for the interpretation. These

are the first in the *Inferno*, and the second in the *Purgatorio*, the piece now before us, which is in fact the proper invocation to the Earthly Paradise. These two have correspondences with one another, and are very pertinent each to its part. The other four are inane and trivial; and their conventional pomp, expressed with the poet's natural splendour of diction, makes them verge on the ludicrous. Can we doubt that a cunning smile wreathed the austere lips of the poet when he wrote "O diva Pegasea"? It is instructive to witness the art which translators use to square this with their sense of poetic decorum. First of all Cary: "O nymph divine, of Pegasean race!"—then Wright, who fights shy altogether, with his "O heavenly Muse"—then Cayley, with most unwarrantable euphemism, "O thou Parnassian Queen."

A signal illustration of the humour of these invocations is reflected to our appreciation from Chaucer's *Hous of Fame*, which is cast in Three Books, and is in a whimsical way patterned upon the *Divina Commedia*. Thus begins his *Liber Tertius*:—

O god of science and of light,
Apollo, through thy grete might,
This litel laste book thou gye!
Nat that I wilne, for maistrye,

CANTO
XXIX.

Here art poetical be shewed ;
 But, for the rym is light and lewed,
 Yit make hit sumwhat agreable,
 Though som vers faile in a sillable ;
 And that I do no diligence
 To shewe craft, but o sentence.
 And if, divyne vertu, thou
 Wilt helpe me to shewe now
 That in myn hede y-marked is—
 Lo, that is for to menen this,
 The Hous of Fame to descryve—
 Thou shalt see me go, as blyve,
 Unto the nexte laure I see,
 And kisse hit, for hit is thy tree ;
 Now entreth in my breste anoon!—

The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer,
 ed. Skeat, vol. III, p. 33.

But, while these six invocations differ in quality so greatly that two of them have an organic relation to the poem which does not appear in the other four, yet of the whole six may this general assertion be made, that they scarcely belong to the most serious side of the poet's work. In form they are traditional and conventional, in theme they touch the art and form, not the matter and motives, of the great work. The real Invocation of the *Divina Commedia* occupies three tercets in the centre of the Hundredth Canto. THAT is a solemn utterance from the depths of a full

heart: THAT is the true Consecrating Prayer, heard in the highest heaven, before the Poem had as yet any existence save only in the Poet's breast.

CANTO
XXIX.

It is thus rendered in English *terza rima* by Cayley (1854):—

O Light Superne, which of thyself so high
Above the ranges of our thoughts art hung,
Of that thou didst appear again supply

My mind some particle, and grant my tongue
Such force, that of thy glories it may leave
One spark, the far posterities among:

For if but my remembrance aught retrieve,
And aught be voiced and bruited in my lay,
Men of thy Triumph shall the more conceive.

It appears to me evident that these two types of invocation were noticed by Milton, and that they were full before his mind when he composed the Invocation to *Paradise Lost*, which has two stages of elevation, the first for his Art, and the second for his Message.

Sing, heavenly Muse, that on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That shepherd, who first taught the chosen seed,
In the beginning how the Heavens and Earth
Rose out of Chaos: Or if Sion hill
Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flow'd
Fast by the oracle of God; I thence

CANTO
XXIX.

Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues,
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.

And chiefly Thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for Thou know'st; Thou from the first
Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread
Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast abyss,
And mad'st it pregnant: What in me is dark,
Illumine: what is low, raise and support;
That to the highth of this great argument
I may assert Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.

The two invocations which I have selected out of the six as being organic, are the first and the fourth. These present a contrast, the one appealing to Memory, the other to Imagination. The first (*Inf.* ii. 7-9) points to the fact that we are to have a narrative of things that were seen, in short, a history; and this (in a poetic sense) is indeed what we have all through the *Inferno*, and through the penal stages of *Purgatory* to the end of the twenty-seventh Canto. From that point there is a change in kind. The narrative passes to Allegory and Symbol.

The historical parts are not indeed without Allegory and Symbol; these appear from time to time, but without transforming the general

character of historical relation. Such are, the old man of Mount Ida, Geryon, the four stars, the girdle of green rush, the three stars, the steps at the gate of Purgatory, the two keys. But these incidents do not affect the general nature of the narrative, which is historical.

CANTO
XXIX.

But with the twenty-eighth Canto, which is the first of the Earthly Paradise, we pass into a new atmosphere, out of the historical into that which is avowedly allegorical and symbolical. The Invocation in the Earthly Paradise is the most urgent of all the six, and its aim is this, that the author may succeed in poetizing things that are hard even to think. It contrasts very distinctly with the apostrophe to Memory (*Inf.* ii. 7-9) under which we have travelled hitherto.

O holy Virgins, if for you
Cold, fasts, and watching e'er I knew,
In this my present need
Must I for guerdon plead.
Helicon here its stream must send,
Urania's choir their aid must lend,
And to my verse must teach
Things hard in thought to reach.

XXIX. 37-42.

And the claim which is here set up for a higher poetic effort, includes in its purview, not these Six Cantos only, but also the first Canto of the

CANTO
XXIX.

Hundred, making the number Seven. Evidence of this will before long meet us on our way.

2. THE COLOURS.

The body colour from one end of the procession to the other was a dazzling White, but the heads of the personages were variously decorated. The twenty-four Elders who represent the Old Testament wore white lilies, so that they were wholly and entirely White, and this conveys that idea of Heb. xi: "These all died in Faith, not having received the promises." White is the colour of Faith.

The crowning colour of the central group as represented by the four beasts is Green, the colour of Hope, because the four beasts are the four Evangelists and the Gospel was "the bringing in of a better Hope."

Green, the colour of Hope, is the emblematic colour of the *Purgatorio*. As the label of the *Inferno* is Despair, so the ensign of the *Purgatorio* is Hope, and it is indicated in the first Canto through the green rush wherewith the pilgrim is girded:—

There girt he me, as pleased That Other,
Oh marvel strange! for lo! another
Such lowly plant forth grew
There whence the first he drew.

I. 133-136.

This is a symbolical way of saying "Hope springs eternal in the human breast"; but with this modification, that its native soil is humility, penitence, and resignation, which are all indicated in the context. These are the conditions under which Hope appears at one end of the *Cantica*; at the other end it appears triumphant and commanding in the olive crown of Beatrice. These, however, are after all only external symbols; it is in the emerald eyes of Beatrice that the very soul of Hope shines forth.

CANTO
XXIX.

Green, as the livery of Spring, is a natural symbol of Hope; but so also is Blue, as the colour of the Sky, and this is preferred by Spenser:—

The second sister that Speranza hight,
Was clad in blew, which her beseemed well.

The seven figures which symbolize the Acts, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse, are crowned with Red, which is the colour of Love. The three main groups of the procession are thus signalized by the three colours of White, Green, and Red, and these three colours are again epitomized in the three nymphs off the right wheel of the Car, which are the impersonations of Faith, Hope, and Charity. In the next Canto

CANTO
XXIX.

we shall see this representation of the Christian virtues still further epitomized, and concentrated in a single personage. So far there is no difference of opinion as to the symbolism of the procession, but the extension which I shall propose for one of the Colours may possibly awaken controversy.

About the colour Green there is more to be said and too momentous to be left unsaid. To this belongs the fresh green meadow (*Inf.* iv. 111) and the green enamel (118), by which we are given to understand that the lot of the righteous heathen is not really destitute of hope, whatever dogmatic generalizations may be current, and may seem to be clothed with the vesture of authority. This thought sends us back to scan more carefully the manifesto which is posted up over the Gate of Hell. It occupies the first paragraph of *Inferno* III, and as it is of great importance to come to a right understanding about it, I will here quote it in full, and join with it Longfellow's line for line translation.

Per me si va nella città dolente,
Through me the way is to the city dolent ;
Per me si va nell' eterno dolore,
Through me the way is to eternal dole ;
Per me si va tra la perduta gente.
Through me the way among the people lost.

Giustizia mosse il mio alto fattore ;
Justice incited my sublime Creator ;

CANTO
XXIX.

Fecemi la divina potestate,
Created me divine Omnipotence,
La somma sapienza e il primo amore.
The highest Wisdom and the primal Love.

Dinanzi a me non fur cose create,
Before me there were no created things,
Se non eterne, ed io eterno duro :
Only eterne, and I eternal last.
Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch' entrate !
All hope abandon, ye who enter in !

Here it is to be observed that the speaker is the Gate itself, a circumstance which begins to assume importance in the eyes of the observer who reverts to it in a scrutinizing spirit. If at first we had let this feature pass as a mere variety of poetic composition, we should now remember how truly dramatic are all speeches in the *Commedia*, and how justly their contents agree with the various characters of the speakers. Also their quality for truth or falsehood is to be estimated by the same standard, and we should cautiously mete out the degree of credit due to an announcement of which the only credential is that the mouth of Hell hath spoken it. Statements emanating from this source are not likely to be true, but they are likely to present a specious appearance of truth. Such

CANTO
XXIX.

appearance is best secured by adherence to the familiar lines of popular and accredited doctrine. The divine attributes are magnified with much plausibility and there is a subtlety in the practical application, which is cast in the imperative mood, so that all positive assertion is eluded, while the sense of irrevocable doom and entire exclusion of hope is effectually conveyed.

This then is the advertisement which Hell puts forth, the claim which Hell advances, measuring its pretensions rather by the greed of its own nature, than by the nature of those high attributes which are so plausibly magnified, and (so to speak) almost appropriated. On the surface of things the claim would seem to have a certain validity within a wide range, but limits there must be somewhere, though it was no part of Virgil's duty to define them, even if he could be possessed of the information. Anyhow, he turns the question, and all this is very deftly done on the part of the poet, if he intended to send the observant reader on his way with just a grain of scepticism on his mind. If otherwise, why the complaint of the pilgrim:—

Maestro, il senso lor m' è duro,
or why does not Virgil affirm categorically the intimation of the Gate?

In the following Canto the pilgrim asks whether

any had ever passed from that place to bliss:— and Virgil informs him that shortly after his own arrival in those parts a Mighty One had come wearing a victor's crown, who had liberated many, and had led them to bliss.

CANTO
XXIX.

After this conversation, they sighted a fire (as it seemed) making a hemisphere of light in the darkness, and as they drew near to it, they met shades of honourable aspect, who seemed neither sorrowful nor glad. These were four chief poets with Homer for their captain, the other three being Horace, Ovid, and Lucan; they welcomed the return of Virgil, and admitted Dante into their fellowship. Then the six poets arrived at the foot of a noble castle, begirt with seven high walls and a fair river over which they walked as if it had been dry land, and then they passed through seven gates, and entered into a verdant meadow ("fresca verdura"), peopled with grave and dignified folk.

If now our dreamer had been John Bunyan the tinker, inditing his vision for village theologians, he would probably have told us right out what the name of this Castle was, and how it came to be planted in that part. But our dreamer's castles are not so easy to name, and the history behind them is too complex to unfold on the march. This however we may venture to surmise that the name of it would not be Doubting Castle, but something

CANTO
XXIX.

far different, such as for example the Castle of Resignation. To this agrees the dignified aspect of the holders, neither sorrowful nor glad. In Resignation is implied, however unconsciously, the principle of Hope symbolized by the carpet of verdure under the feet of the grave company who talk sparingly with voices sweet.

But how came this Castle to be built there, and who endowed it with its marvellous light, and who laid out that green meadow? Is it enough to say that the light is the light of Poesy, encircled round with the rings or courses of a liberal education? I rather think the poet's design is deeper, and that the light is that which shined in Peter's prison (*lumen refulsit in habitaculo*, Acts xii. 7), and that also of Isaiah lx. 19 and Apocalypse xxi. 23, and indeed that this noble Castle is a remote dependency of the city described in the latter chapter. Moreover the founder and builder of this Castle is none other than that Puissant Victor who in the early days of Virgil's sojourn in that circuit had led captivity captive, and had left this fortress behind him as a monument of his conquest, and an earnest of his further purposes in the fullness of time.

If the reader object to these details as fanciful vagaries, I shall attempt no defence, but accept his sentence, be it what it may. I mean so far as

regards the identification of the founder, the name of the Castle, and the motive of its erection: but what I have said about the green meadow as an emblem of Hope, by that I stand, and I maintain that it is verily according to the mind of the poet. In this point I trust every competent reader will agree, as I have presently a much bolder interpretation to broach, for the reception of which I count upon this as a step and a preparation.

CANTO
XXIX.

Here let us pause and review our position. We have arrived at this—that whatever may be the precise import of the “obscure” announcement at the Gate, it plainly does not establish the entire exclusion of Hope. For, since that manifesto was set up, the region has been raided by a powerful conqueror, who rescued the worthies of God’s ancient people, and left tokens of Hope for those of the heathen world.

And here we must call to mind some important pieces of evidence which occur in the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*. From *Purgatorio* I. 90 we learn that Cato had been delivered from the lower region, doubtless by the same Conqueror, and that he had been installed as Warden of the seven realms of purgation. From *Purgatorio* X and *Paradiso* XX we learn that the heathen emperor Trajan had been granted to the prayers of Gregory, had been emancipated from the limbo

CANTO
XXIX.

of Hell, and had been exalted to a place of great honour in the bliss of Paradise. These were huge infringements of the law of the Gate, and when taken together they constitute a strong earnest of future salvation for the righteous heathen.

But as these were all denizens of the first circle, and as they had never come under the jurisdiction of Minos, the reader will probably not find it hard to yield all that is claimed for these. He may however be staggered by our next subject, for we now proceed to consider the case of a prisoner, who has been doomed to have his portion low down in the pit of infamy.

I do not know whether it would be possible for a poet to give stronger proof of a high and imperative vocation than Dante has done in his treatment of Brunetto Latini. Through the whole of that singular interview (*Inf.* xv.) we plainly see that the poet's heart still clings to his old friendship, and yearns after his once admired and honoured master, even while he unflinchingly stigmatizes his abominable sin. The closing lines of that Canto may seem to give him a grotesque and contemptuous dismissal, but assuredly there is another meaning lurking under that bizarre portrayal:—

Poi si rivolse, e parve di coloro

Then he turned round, and seemed to be of those

Che corrono a Verona il drappo verde
Who at Verona run for the Green Mantle

CANTO
 XXIX.

Per la campagna; e parve di costoro
Across the plain; and seemed to be among them

Quegli che vince e non colui che perde.

The one who wins and not the one who loses.

Whoever will weigh this passage in connexion with the symbolism of the colour Green, must, I think, conclude that what is here suggested is nothing less than the ultimate hope of mercy for Brunetto Latini. It is not merely the fact that the prize for which he seems to run is called the Green Mantle (though that is surely symbolical), but there is the marked earnestness in his manner of running that he runs like one who is going to win. This is suggested and animated by the words of St. Paul:—"So run that ye may obtain" (1 Cor. ix. 24)—"I therefore so run, not as uncertainly" (verse 26). And not only are the closing words of the Canto from that source, but it appears to me that they are designed to prompt thoughts in the serious reader, different from the vulgar notion of Hell, and different from the *affiche* at the Gate.

When once we have caught the idea that perhaps Dante may be purposing to leave seeds of a better eschatology than that prevalent in his time, we shall find other food to sustain that idea. The

CANTO
XXIX.

conversation with Farinata and Cavalcante Cavalcanti in Canto X of the *Inferno* does not leave the general impression of utter abandoned hopeless endless woe. And I would instance particularly that inquiry about the faculty which the shades of the dead were anciently credited with, the faculty of predicting future events. What is the point and aim of that enquiry? Is it merely to clear that matter up and to furnish a correct statement of the case, and to place it on poetical record that they lose sight of the event as it nears them; *or* has the poet some further aim? Surely the aim of this whole topic is revealed in line 102, where Farinata says that "to this extent the Sovereign Ruler doth still enlighten us." By this it seems that the heretics are not quite forsaken of God, and we find room to hope that the changes expected at the day of judgment may possibly bring some alleviation to the lot of Farinata and of Cavalcante Cavalcanti.

It is perhaps a fruitless speculation, yet one can hardly help wondering how Dante had arrived at opinions on this dim subject so far superior to the theology of his time. Had he, in visits to universities during his years of exile, had access to the patristic writings of the first four centuries? Or had he, by the noblest of all theological paths, found his own way to these

conclusions by devout and earnest meditation upon the revealed attributes of God? CANTO
XXIX.

3. THE GRIPHON.

The Griphon is said by the commentators to represent Christ, and this opinion is in possession of the field. But how would this agree with the colours of white and red in the description? The main colour is White, that is to say, the foundation of the Griphon's character is Faith. Is it possible that the poet (who was a theologian) could have meant to apply this characteristic to Christ? When was Faith ever attributed to Him? Of His people it is the most universal and comprehensive attribute; they are Believers, "Fideles," the Faithful: such is their commonest designation. But for Christ Himself, He awakens faith in others; He is the object, not the subject of faith. The text itself furnishes us with abundant evidence of the poet's meaning, which is very far indeed from that which the commentators have imposed upon him. The Griphon symbolizes the general body of the Faithful, the bulk of the Christian congregation, the simple folk, the unlettered laity, and his rigid figure is the complement to the graceful beauty of Beatrice, who represents the *elite*, the dignity, authority, wisdom, and government of the Christian Church.

CANTO
XXIX. Further evidence in support of this interpretation will accrue from time to time as we proceed.

4. THE CAR.

The Car exceeds in triumphal splendour all examples of historic description or poetic imagination.

Ne'er car so fair did Rome provide,
For Scipio's or Augustus' pride :
Nay, Sol's own chariot there
But sorry grace would wear.

XXIX. 115-117.

This might easily be passed over as merely expletive and decorative, but it is under such superficial colouring that Dante hides deep meanings. A sly vein of humour is apt to peep out even in his most solemn moods. Conventional as this simile looks, it touches the highest purpose of the poem. The victory celebrated by the Car is more glorious than military or cosmical glory, because it is the victory of righteousness. "Ride on, because of the word of truth, of meekness, of righteousness." This is the victory indicated by the culminating words of that solemn Dedication which forms the centre-piece of the Hundredth Canto.

5. THE PROCESSION.

This pageant, which is designed as a *festa* to greet the new comer, is conceived after the manner of a

bridal procession. In line 60 the slow movement of the Candelabra had been illustrated by a reference to the pace of newly-married brides, which would seem an irrelevant comparison, were it not something more than a simile. The association of ideas thus introduced is now recalled and sustained. It is continued by the chant in verses 85-87 :—

CANTO
XXIX.

'Neath sky so fair, of my device,
Elders crowned each with fleur-de-lys
Came forth, by two and two
Twice twelve in order due.
They chanted all: "Oh! blest is thee
"Mongst Adam's daughters; yea and be
"For everlasting blest
"Thy graces loveliest!"

XXIX. 82-87.

The dancing nymphs to the right and left of the Car bear out the same analogy. Further evidence to the same effect will meet us in the next Canto.

And every indication assures us that this pageant was prepared expressly for the reception of the Pilgrim. The Fair Lady prompted and quickened his attention to it. The flowery lawn right over-against where the pilgrim stands, is made the central arena of the demonstration, the spot where the Car is arrested when thunder is heard and the Procession halts.

THE THIRD CANTO OF THE
EARTHLY PARADISE.

PURGATORIO XXX.

When the procession halted, the four-and-twenty Elders turned round towards the Car as to their peace, that is to say, as to that by which the long sustained expectations of Faith were satisfied. And one of them, as it were a heaven-sent messenger, cried *Veni sponsa de Libano* three several times, and all the others after him. At this shout, the Car became full of angels, who said *Benedictus qui venis*, and withal scattered flowers upwards and round about; and in the midst of this shower, like the morning sun emerging out of a roseate mist, there appeared a lady with wreath of olive over a white veil, and a flame-coloured vesture under a mantle of green. Forthwith the pilgrim, without discerning further, was, by some occult influence proceeding from her, conscious of the strong touch of ancient love.

At this sudden revival of a passion with which he had been smitten before his boyhood was past, he turned for solace to Virgil, but lo! Virgil was gone; and he wept, even in that happy place. Then he heard a voice, calling him by name:—

But we had been by Virgil left,
 Of Virgil, father sweet, bereft,
 Virgil, to whom I gave me,
 And turned to him to save me.

CANTO
 XXX.

Not all the vision of that place
 Our ancient mother lost, had grace
 My dew-cleansed cheeks to guard
 From tears their hue that marred.

“Dante, weep not; though Virgil be

“Departed, weep not yet: for thee

“Behoves thy tears be poured

“At stroke of other sword.”

XXX. 49-57.

At the sound of his name he turned towards the
 Car, and there, like some admiral in his flag-ship,
 he saw the lady directing her eyes towards him
 from the other side of the stream. Her counten-
 ance was hidden by the veil, but her attitude,
 commanding and even stern, was that of a speaker
 who has something more pungent yet to say:—

“Look well! ’tis Beatris, ’tis I:

“How didst thou dare that hill to try?

“Didst thou not know that this

“Is man’s appointed bliss?”

My eyes within the fountain clear

Sank down, and met my semblance there:

Then on the grass were laid,

Such shame my brow o’erweighed.

XXX. 73-78.

CANTO
XXX.

Here is the stroke, the blow that was to be worse than the loss of Virgil. Shame overwhelmed him, and he grew torpid as winter's snow. But when the angels began to chant Psalm xxxi:—

IN TE DOMINE SPERAVI.

In the, O Lorde, have I put my trust: let me neuer be put to cōfufyon: delyuer me ī thy righteoufneffe.

Bowe downe thine eare to me, make hafte to deliuer me: be thou my ftrong rocke and a house of defence, y^t thou mayest faue me.

For y^u art my fstronge holde, & my castel: Be thou also my gide, & leade me for thy names sake.

Drawe me out of the nett that they haue layed prively for me, for y^u art my strength.

Into thy handes I cōmende my fprete: For thou haft delyuered me, O Lorde thou God of trueth.

I haue hated thē y^t holde of superftitious vanities, & my trust hath bene in the Lorde.

I wyll be glad and reioyfe in thy mercy: for y^u haft confydred my trouble, and haft knowne my foul in aduerfyte.

Thou haft not fhut me vp in to the hāde of the enemye, but haft fet my fete in a large rowme.

The Psalter of 1539.

he felt the warm touch of their compassion, and he melted in sighs and tears.

The pity manifested by the angelic company is answered by Beatrice in a severe discourse which is meant for the ear of the pilgrim. She states the case against him, with the view of giving

him pain equal to his fault, and bringing him to penitence which may qualify him to taste the water of Lethe. Her indictment is that whereas by the gifts of nature and by the special largess of divine grace, he was at the time of his "New Life" a youth of singular promise, he disappointed expectation; and although by the encouragement of her youthful eyes she kept him right while he was with her, yet no sooner did she pass to her second age and condition of life, than he withdrew from her and gave himself to another. When she had risen from flesh to spirit with increase of beauty and worth, she was less pleasing to him, and he was led away from the true path by false images of good in which there is no fulfilment. By her prayers he was visited with good inspirations and visions, but he was not recalled; he had grown indifferent. When all appliances had failed and none remained, save showing him the state of the lost, she had gone to the gates of Hell, and with tears implored the help of Virgil, by whom he had been conducted hither. It would be a breach of the divine decree, if Lethe were passed without the cost of repentant tears.

So ends the Third Canto of the Earthly Paradise.

The most important points to be considered here, are: First, the salutation, *Benedictus qui*

CANTO
XXX.

venis: Second, the attire of Beatrice: Third, the disappearance of Virgil: Fourth, the central line of the Canto, line 73, and the rest of that tercet: Fifth, the indictment.

I. THE SALUTATION.

To whom is that salutation addressed: *Benedictus qui venis*? This question has been answered diversely; some say it is addressed to the pilgrim; others say, to the Griphon; others again, to Beatrice. And this last is the opinion which is most in favour at the present time. The words are borrowed from the applause of the crowd at the entry of Christ into Jerusalem, and it is thought that, notwithstanding the masculine gender, Beatrice is the fittest person present to be the recipient of such homage.

But in order to determine this salutation in accordance with the mind of the poet, we must consider the whole situation, and its antecedents; and observe what indications are provided for the interpretation. We have seen reason to think that the pageant is conceived as a bridal procession, and that it has a pointed reference to the pilgrim, who had been guided towards it by the Fair Lady, after a long and painful journey through Hell and Purgatory. We have heard the call to the bride: *Veni sponsa de Libano*, and it seems plain that

this *Benedictus qui venis* is addressed to the bridegroom: and who is that bridegroom? Those who think that the Gryphon signifies Christ, ought in consistency to hold that this salutation is addressed to *him*. But if this is impossible, as indeed will become more and more apparent as we proceed, then it remains that the salutation must be addressed to the pilgrim. And I think that by the time we reach the close of the next Canto, we shall be inclined to say that in this view lies the only possible solution.

CANTO
XXX.

2. THE ATTIRE OF BEATRICE.

This consists of a flame-coloured vesture, over which is a mantle of green; a veil of white screens her countenance, and over it is a wreath of olive. The colours are the epitome of the three Nymphs, the three Christian Graces, in the former Canto, just as they in their colours exhibited an epitome of the procession. The colour of broadest area is Green, for it is through the instrumentality of Beatrice that Hope is kept alive in the pilgrim through the darkest passages, and that it increases to the end. Though her attire displays all the colours of Faith, Hope, and Charity, yet the peculiar appropriateness of Hope to her present office is signalized by a threefold repetition. She has a green mantle,

CANTO
XXX.

a wreath of olive over her veil, and eyes of emerald. In accordance with this, she represents from end to end the principle of Hope. It is by her action that the pilgrim is rescued from despair and encouraged through a fearful journey; by her that in the Earthly Paradise his aspirations are exalted; and to her as the sustainer of his Hope he addresses his parting words of gratitude:—

O Donna, in cui la mia speranza vige.

Paradiso, XXXI. 79.

Green is the proper livery of the *Purgatorio*, as may be seen in the angels of *Purgatorio* VIII.

It should here be noticed that the veil of Beatrice betokens a bride.

3. THE DISAPPEARANCE OF VIRGIL.

Ma Virgilio n' avea lasciati scemi

Di sè, Virgilio dolcissimo padre,

Virgilio a cui per mia salute die' mi.

XXX. 49-51.

The disappearance of Virgil coincides with the appearance of Beatrice, and her first words are to divert the attention of Dante from his loss of Virgil. To bring the pilgrim to Beatrice was the limit of his powers, as he himself said at the first encounter:—

“I, for thy profit pondering, now devise

That thou mayst follow me; and I, thy guide,

Will lead thee hence through an eternal space,
 Where thou shalt hear despairing shrieks, and see
 Spirits of old tormented, who invoke
 A second death; and those next view, who dwell
 Content in fire, for that they hope to come,
 Whene'er the time may be, among the blest,
 Into whose regions if thou then desire
 To ascend, a spirit worthier than I,
 Must lead thee, in whose charge, when I depart
 Thou shalt be left: for that Almighty King,
 Who reigns above, a rebel to his law
 Adjudges me; and therefore hath decreed
 That, to his city, none through me should come.
 He in all parts hath sway; there rules, there holds
 His citadel and throne. O happy those,
 Whom there he chuses!"

CANTO
XXX.

Inferno, I. 112 ff. tr. Cary.

Accordingly, we now find that the voice of Virgil becomes silent for a space before he comes where Beatrice is, and that in her actual presence he disappears. This is an allegory of Reason and Faith.

But here the question arises, Why should Virgil be chosen to represent human reason, and not rather Aristotle, "the master of those who know," the master of Albert and Thomas, the ancient name most universally celebrated in the intellectual world of the thirteenth century. It may be answered, that the Philosopher represents the intellect, which is only one factor in human reason; whereas the Poet represents the whole man, which

CANTO
XXX.

is composed of instinct and emotion and intellect, the correlative factors of human reason. And herein lies also the cause why Theology claims very near kindred with Poesy, while it has always manifested something of antagonism towards Philosophy. Of natural human reason the fullest outcome, the maturest bloom, is to be recognized in the highest forms of Poetry. There is one aspect, and only one, in which Philosophy can rank higher than Poetry, as an expression of human reason and as a guide of the human soul. That aspect is seen, where Philosophy serves under Theology, as Matilda under Beatrice.

Something of this kind may have been in the field and atmosphere of Dante's meditation when he made Virgil the guide to conduct his pilgrim to Beatrice. But the formulated motive was that which he has recorded by the mouth of Statius, namely this, that Virgil had already been the unconscious means of bringing heathens to Christ.

'Twas thine to be as one at night,
Behind his back that bears a light,
Whence others may be taught
Though him it profit nought.
So didst thou sing the world's new birth,
And justice lighting on the earth,
And a new progeny
Descending from the sky.

And understand that by thy aid
Poet was I and Christian made:

CANTO
XXX.

And now the outline faint
My hand shall reach to paint.

XXII. 67-75.

And this suggests (as indeed it was doubtless intended to suggest) that the experience of Statius did not stand alone, but was typical of many whose love for Virgil had been to them a *præparatio evangelica*.

Some modern critics have raised a philanthropic cry against the equity of our poet, who after such distinguished services required of Virgil and admirably discharged by him, lets him fall back unnoticed into the Limbo of desire without hope. Such critics miss the mind of Dante, because they have not mastered his methods. The first of all keys to understand Dante is to observe that he conveys his meanings as meanings are actually conveyed in the world, here a little and there a little; so that the person who will know what is going on is he who cultivates a habit of observation and learns how to put this and that together. All this only amounts to saying that Dante is eminently dramatic. We must not take the information we get as if it were absolutely true, but only as if it were relatively true, that is, as if it contained the degree and kind of truth

CANTO
XXX.

which was to be expected from the mouth of each informant.

If we take Virgil's account of his own prospects as complete and final, and admitting of no question, then his habitation is fixed in the Limbo of desire without hope, and he is exiled eternally from the presence of God. Such is the effect of what he himself said to Dante :—"che senza speme vivemo in disio" (*Inf.* iv. 42), combined with what he said to Statius :—

So there appeared a shade behind,
 Eyeing the crowd that lay reclined :
 And, for no heed we took,
 He was the first that spoke.
 "Brethren," he said "God give you peace" :
 Then straight we turned us from our place,
 And Virgil made the sign
 Meet for that word benign ;
 And then "Of peace in council blest
 "Be thou by that true court possessed,
 "Whence into exile I
 "Am sent eternally."

XXI. 10-18.

Of Virgil's good faith in making such statements we cannot for a moment doubt, but what right have we to assume that he was himself so well informed on this matter, as to command our implicit belief? In fact, it appears to me more than probable that he was very much in the dark about his own immediate future.

Let us collect some incidental notices which seem to bear on this subject and lay them together, and observe whether they agree with Virgil's way of describing his own prospects. That speech of Beatrice (reported by Virgil) which opens in the central tercet of *Inferno* II, has the following close:—

CANTO
XXX.

Quando sarò dinanzi al Signor mio,
Di te mi loderò sovente a lui.

This is in perfect keeping with the whole situation, of which the essential is this, that in the courts above choice has been made of Virgil that he shall be sent forth to minister to one who is an heir of salvation (*Purg.* i. 61). If we compare this great mission with the promise of Beatrice, they harmonize well together, but they only make Virgil's despondent tones the more strange and hard to reconcile.

In *Purgatorio* XXII Statius acknowledges a great debt to Virgil, for that he had been the unconscious means of guiding him in the true path of righteousness and salvation. This was not a solitary case, but an example of Virgil's influence, and it certainly must be understood to shed a reflex light upon the destiny of Virgil himself. For surely we shall not err if we apply to him those words of the prophet Daniel:—

CANTO
XXX.

“And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament: and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever” (xii. 3).

If we consider the parting address of Virgil to Dante, we find in it a tone of authority, the subaltern authority of a trusted servant (like that of Abraham's seneschal in Genesis xxiv), but it leaves behind it the fragrance of an authorized benediction. He confers degrees, not for learning but for maturity of character, and having thus decorated his ward he quits the position of master and leader, and falls behind, and becomes the *pedisequus* of his former pupil, a veritable *servus servorum Dei*. A great mission thoroughly discharged, a superior office fully asserted and exercised, a high elevation modestly carried, a simple unnoticed retirement into obscurity—what are these but tokens of grace?

In fact, the impression created by a survey of the data is this, that the hour of Virgil's salvation was near and he was unconscious of it. He could predict the future bliss of Cato which was distant (*Purg.* i. 75), but he could not foresee his own which was nigh. Here we must call to mind the answer which Farinata rendered when Dante asked how it was the shades were ignorant of passing events and yet could predict things future.

"We view, as one who hath an evil sight,"
 He answer'd, "plainly, objects far remote;
 So much of his large splendour yet imparts
 The Almighty Ruler; but when they approach,
 Or actually exist, our intellect
 Then wholly fails; nor of your human state,
 Except what others bring us, know we aught."

CANTO
 XXX.

Inferno, X, 100 ff. tr. Cary.

We infer then, upon a view of the whole case, that Virgil could foresee the distant beatitude of Cato, but was unaware of his own, simply because it was very near. It is an epical feature in our poet's art, that careers are left incomplete, just as they are in our experience of life, and we are to judge the completion by the fragment. This happens in varying degrees; we have less to supplement in the case of Statius, and more in that of Virgil, but with the data supplied, we can hardly say that the task is more problematical.

4. LINE 73.

The 73rd line is the central line of this Canto, and it is a line of marked prominence, as regards the architecture of the Poem. For this Canto is the central one of that complete set of Seven, to which I have already referred as containing the central symbolism. The advent of Beatrice as Virgil's successor is intimated in the First Canto of the *Inferno*, the first also of these symbolic

CANTO
XXX. Seven, and now in the central Canto of the
Seven, and in its central place, we have:—

Guardaci ben: ben son, ben son Beatrice!

Come degnasti d' accedere al monte?

Non sapei tu, che qui è l' uom felice?

XXX. 73-75.

What struck him down with confusion and shame was this: that in his search for happiness he had chosen “il diletto monte” (*Inf.* i. 77) instead of “il santo monte”. Contrary to his knowledge and better judgment, he had chosen Science and Philosophy to the neglect of Theology and Beatrice.

5. THE INDICTMENT.

Is the matter of this indictment a revelation of the inner history of the poet, or is it typical of a class of men in his time, and so of human proclivity under given conditions? The wish to discover biographical material, which exercises such a strong influence upon the interpretation of the *Vita Nuova*, makes itself felt also in certain passages of the *Commedia*; and this is one of them. That a poet's personal experience must always supply part, and indeed the richest part, of his material, is too obvious to come under discussion. But whether Dante's aim in particular passages shall be taken as autobiographical, will depend with each reader upon the notion he

has formed of Dante's character and of the main design of his great Poem. The falling away here charged against the pilgrim is the more likely to be proximately real, because the like has happened to so many men of high natural gifts and early religious training; they have been started in their "New Life" with a lofty standard, and have failed to live up to it. And when the rivalry of Science endangers Faith, they are apt to succumb, some for life, others for a time. The most comprehensive solution is perhaps the best; namely, that the charge is true against Dante himself and against many another of his class and time; and that accordingly he does not here assume the position of a censor of others, but rather submits himself to reproof for a fault common to many. What makes it just that he should be chosen to exemplify the suffering, is to be found in the superior gifts with which he has been endowed and the superior vocation to which he aspires.

The Canto closes in the middle of Beatrice's charge; thus provoking a sense of incompleteness. There is a meaning in this. This and the following Canto are twin, each in its way a centre, one being the centre of the Seven, the other of the Five. The two together contain the Act of Severity, and the Reconciliation which brings peace and assurance for ever.

THE FOURTH CANTO OF THE
EARTHLY PARADISE.

PURGATORIO XXXI.

Changing her manner she made her address direct, and demanded his answer to the charge. He attempts to speak, but his voice dies in his throat. She insists upon his saying whether it is or is not true : and he at length utters "Yes," but so feebly, that only by help of sight was it intelligible. Then follows her expostulation.

And she : "In my desires, that strove
"To lead thee where that good to love,
 "That good so great, that higher
 "May never man aspire,
"What dykes across thy path were set,
"Or by what chainings wast thou let,
 "That must thy passage foil,
 "And thee of hope despoil ?
"What forwarding, what comfort light,
"Could others open to thy sight,
 "That thou shouldst turn from me
 "And in their presence be ?"

XXXI. 22-30.

At length the confession is extorted from him that when she was gone he had followed present attractions which were unprofitable. Her reply conveys forgiveness : she consoles him, and bids

him listen to the instruction which she proceeds to draw from his error. How differently ought her death to have affected him, than that he should seek passing gratifications! He stood with eyes to ground like a scolded child, when she bade him look up and he should feel yet more pain through what he would see. With great effort he looked up, and then he saw that the angels had ceased strewing flowers and that Beatrice was now turned towards the monster "which is one sole person in two natures." Though her veil was over her face, and though he stood on the other side of the river, her beauty so overcame him that his repentance was more than he could bear, and he fell down senseless. When he came to himself, he was in the river up to his throat, and the Fair Lady was over him saying, "Hold fast by me!" As he neared the blessed bank, he heard *Asperges me* sung with a sweetness under which the effort of memory fails.

ASPERGES ME.

Thou fhalt pouрге me with Ifope, and I fhall be
cleane: thou fhalt wafh me, ād I fhall be whiter then
fnowe:

Thou fhalt make me heare of ioye ād gladneffe, that
the bones which y^u haft broken, maye reioyfe.

Turne thy face from my fynnes, & put out all my
mifdedes.

CANTO XXXI. Make me a cleane hert (O God) & renue a ryght
fprete within me.

Caft me not away from thy prefence, & take not thy
holy fprete from me.

O geue me the comforte of thy helpe agayne, ād
ftablifh me with thy fre fprete.

Then fhall I teach thy wayes vnto the wicked, and
fynners shall be cōuerted vnto the.

The Psalter of 1539: Psalm li.

The Fair Lady made him drink of Lethê, and
after his bath she conducted him into the dance of
the Four nymphs who welcomed him and said :—

“Nymphs are we here, and stars in heaven :

“Ere Beatris from above was given

“To earth, ordained were we,

“Her handmaidens to be.

“And we will bring thee to her eyes :

“On the glad light to gaze that lies

“Therein, yon Three shall teach

‘Who to its depths can reach.’”

XXXI. 106-III.

This they said singing, and then they led him
to the breast of the Griphon towards which
Beatrice was still looking from the Car ; and so
he stood face to face with her. Then the Four
bade him use his eyes, now the opportunity
was afforded him of looking into those emeralds
which had captivated him long ago.

Upon those deeply reflecting eyes which were

still fixed upon the Griphon, the pilgrim now riveted his longing gaze. In that position he saw the reflexion of the thing she was gazing at and thinking of, and strange to say, it did not correspond to the form of the Griphon, but that form was translated into human figures, now of priests and now of kings. At this sight the joy of the pilgrim was exalted to its highest pitch, and when the Three saw this in him, they came forward with song and dance, and their song was this :—

CANTO
XXXI.

“Turn, turn thy holy eyes upon,
“Upon” they sang “thy faithful one,
 “Who on so long a road
 “To see thy face hath trod.
“Of grace do grace to us and show
“To him thy mouth, that he may know
 “Thy second charms revealed,
 “Till now by thee concealed.”

XXXI. 133-138.

The Canto closes with the ecstasy of the pilgrim at the revelation of Beatrice's diviner beauty, when in open air she did unveil.

The points which call for special notice on this Canto are (1) the Homily, lines 43-63 : (2) line 81, being the crucial passage concerning the Griphon : (3) the account which the Four nymphs

CANTO
XXXI.

give of themselves, 106-108: (4) Line 123: "Or con uni or con altri reggimenti": which is the third capital passage about the Griphon.

I. THE HOMILY.

There are three passages in which the same subject is treated with variations, and this, which is the middle one, I have chosen, for a reason which will presently appear, as the text of my comment upon the group. The other two members of this group are XXX. 124-138, and XXXIII. 85-90.

All three are uttered by Beatrice, under differing conditions. The first is part of the indictment which is addressed to the compassionate angels with the severity of justice; the second (after his penitence is accepted) is addressed to Dante for his edification, and this I have ventured to call the Homily; the third is a mere allusion to the past, made in the confidence and security of eternal friendship.

Three questions are urged upon us by these passages, namely, (*a*) How are we to understand the death of Beatrice?—(*b*) What is meant by increase of beauty and worth?—and (*c*) What was the truant path of the pilgrim? All three of these passages contribute material for answering these questions, but it is in the Homily that

the subject is expanded with the fullest development of rhetorical illustration.

CANTO
XXXI.

“Albeit, that thou thy fault mayest see
“With greater shame, and braver be,
 “When thou shalt list again
 “To the false Siren’s strain,
“The sowing of thy tears suspend,
“And to my buried flesh attend,
 “How counterwise ’twas meet
 “That it should move thy feet.
“Nature nor art have shown thee ne’er
“Such grace, as in the members fair,
 “That I was clothed withal,
 “On earth now scattered all:
“And, if my death had ta’en from thee
“That highest pleasure, could there be
 “Aught mortal, that should fire
 “Thy heart with its desire?
“Rather ’twas thine, when first the stroke
“Of those false joys upon thee broke,
 “To rise and pass before
 “To me, now such no more.
“Thy part ’twas not to stoop thy wings,
“And court the breath of lightsome things,
 “The glance of girlish eye,
 “Or like brief vanity.
“The second onset and the third
“The nestling waits: for full-fledged bird
 “In vain the net is spread,
 “In vain the shaft is sped.”

XXXI. 43-63.

CANTO
XXXI.

(a) In what sense could the death of Beatrice make an epoch in the life of the Christian pilgrim? What is meant by her members, which were so fair to look upon, being scattered in the earth? Why are the incidents of mortality, which in the *Vita Nuova* are so ingeniously evaded, expressed here in such a plain and concrete fashion?

The death of Beatrice is the expiration of juvenile theology, with its types and figures and shadows, and the romantic charm of old Hebrew stories, and marvellous legends of saints, and many a medieval miracle with a beautiful moral, of piety aptly rewarded and wrongdoing compensated with poetical justice; a childish paradise where everything is right, and heaven is just above the tops of the elm-trees.

The growth of experience, the discovery of the actual conditions of human life, and the struggling lot imposed upon truth and virtue and piety, the passion for combat which fires the breast of generous youth, the hunger for wider knowledge of things as they are, the expansion of intellect—all these incidents of manly development draw off the attention in new directions, and leave that childish theology to neglect and atrophy and decay.

In the *Vita Nuova* all direct assertion of the

death of Beatrice is evaded. The poet certainly does speak of her "death," both beforehand in the way of presentiment, and afterwards in the way of allusion, but nowhere in the form of narrative does he say plainly that Beatrice died. In all such places he uses an indirect expression—she departed—she was called to glory—she was taken—was gone to Heaven—departed out of this world—gone to the new world—made a citizen of Eternal Life.

CANTO
XXXI.

In fact, the death of Beatrice was embarrassing to him, and he passed it over as lightly as he could. He excused himself from narrating it in detail, and he assigned three reasons for disappointing expectation. The first reason is solid and sufficient; the other two are naught, and they are added only to divert and divide the reader's attention. But while he mystifies the reader he is scrupulous about truth. The real reason is assigned, only not plainly, but *per ambages*, in such a way that it might easily escape notice. If any one will take the necessary trouble, he will discover the reason to be—that the death of Beatrice was not found among the things written in the book of the author's memory:—in other words, it never happened. Now the author was writing with a quasi-historical motive, to make the history of Beatrice known, and though he had

CANTO
XXXI. no hesitation in presenting allegory as history, yet he scrupled to narrate that which would contain no truth at all, either historical or allegorical. The death of Beatrice had a true meaning in his mind, but the circumstances of her death and burial would have no true meaning at all, as they were not found in the book of his memory, and as they could not have any allegorical equivalent.

Hence his manifest embarrassment about the death of Beatrice: he cannot declare the true state of the case because the very aim of his little book is to set up the mundane history of Beatrice; and he had no sufficient justification to his own mind for narrating a fictitious history of her decease. The disquisition upon comparative almanacks in *Vita Nuova* XXX is simply a blind to cover this embarrassment.

But there is no such cause of embarrassment in the *Earthly Paradise*, where no obituary report is expected of him: and where he can choose among the incidents of mortality such as naturally bear an allegorical meaning. In the *Vita Nuova* the history is in the foreground and the allegory is in the background, but in the *Earthly Paradise* the allegory is in the foreground, the spiritual meaning is the only meaning that is of any account, and wherever physical terms are used

they are transparent figures of the spiritual, and they have no other validity whatever. When Beatrice here speaks of her death, of her members disintegrated in the earth, of her change from body to spirit, all this is to be understood of the shedding of those *πρωτὰ στοιχεῖα* which have supplied the framework of juvenile theology.

“When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. . . . And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three.”—1 Cor. xiii.

(b) The increase of beauty and worth is when from these deciduous things comes forth into view the divine beauty of character which is animated by the spiritual Graces of Faith, Hope, and Charity.

Faith, Hope, and Charity constitute the visible platform of these twin Cantos XXX and XXXI; and it was the business of XXIX to set it out as the garniture preparatory to the espousals. The Books of the Old and New Testaments are marshalled forth under the crowning colours of White, Green, and Red; which is as much as to say that the spirit of all Scripture is comprised in Faith, Hope, and Charity. These three heavenly Graces appear also in person, and it is

CANTO
XXXI.

in an epitome of their livery that Beatrice, when all the preparations are complete, appears as a bride adorned for espousal. And the colours she wears are her true colours, they are no mere outward bedizenment, she is compact of the virtues they proclaim. And this is the secret of her second beauty, it is the proper beauty of her second state of life, it is the divine virtues irradiating with their true native expression the countenance of the beloved. The pilgrim had already seen the emerald eyes of Hope radiant with anticipations quickened by Faith and Love, and his power of appreciating that divine and holy look with its depth of meaning, proved him qualified in the school of Faith, Hope, and Charity to see the gracious expression of her mouth and her whole divine beauty unveiled. This is the grand transition into new relations of eternal alliance.

And as she passes into ever higher degrees of beauty, it is still the exaltation of the same divine graces, and it is still followed by a corresponding elevation of character in the lover whom she has chosen. The rapture of his admiration for her is to him the avenue of edification, and with the ever new and surprising exaltation of her beauty moves *pari passu* the progress of his moral and spiritual elevation. And the result of this

progress is indicated by the catechism on Faith, Hope, and Charity by the three Apostles in *Paradiso* XXIV, XXV, XXVI. As in *Purgatorio* XXXI he satisfied the Three Graces on the emotional side, so now these three Cantos bring out his proficiency on the intellectual side; and as then he was rewarded by the second beauty of Beatrice, so now he is approved worthy of a remote and comprehensive view of the divine operations in *Paradiso* XXVIII.

CANTO
XXXI.

These three Cantos speak not so much by their contents as by the eloquence of their architectonic placement. Indeed, we may say of all the scientific discourses that they stand not for their contents but for the scholastic discussions which they represent. The disquisitions in the *Paradiso*, on the spots in the moon, on the will absolute or conditional, the difficulties about redemption, the admonition of Thomas Aquinas not to assent to any proposition without having fully examined it, the solution of the doubt concerning the salvation of the heathen, and all such matter of a purely speculative kind is widely distributed in an atmosphere of Faith, Hope, and Love, to which he is ever drawn and assimilated more and more by the ravishing beauty of his conductress. It is by Love that the mind is laid open to intellectual truth, and is prepared for

CANTO
XXXI. apprehending the sublimest mysteries. And now, if we look back to *Purgatorio* XXIX, we may see why the pilgrim was received with a Grand Parade of Faith, Hope, and Charity, and why the chief bridesmaids were the Three Christian Graces. This is the discipline of Beatrice, this is the "via divina" (xxxiii. 89).

(c) And this guides us to answer the next question:—What was the grave mistake which Dante made in the choice of his path after the death of Beatrice? Here we must brush aside the idea that anything like carnal temptation is hinted at in "The glance of girlish eye" (*pargoletta*). We are clearly past the stage at which such an imputation could be in place. After purification in the fire of the seventh cornice, that weakness is no longer to be thought of.

In fact, the whole atmosphere is allegorical. When childish theology is left behind, there is a danger lest all theology be dropped with it. The forms of spiritual thought are not, to the unwary eye and to the speculative mind, so very different from the merely intellectual forms of generalization and abstraction and those wide-reaching universals which are the wings of Science.

There is a moment in the development of an ardent intellect, especially if employed upon sacred

texts, when it may almost unconsciously let religion slip and close with philosophy instead, and hardly notice the change till it has proceeded some way. That this actually happened to Dante is related in the *Vita Nuova*. He says that after the death of Beatrice he gave his affections for a time to a certain "donna gentile," and this is told in such a simple, natural, realistic way that some of his friends took it for matter of fact, and this he found inconvenient. The consequence was that he felt constrained to divulge his allegory, and to declare in the *Convito* that by the *donna gentile* was signified *donna Filosofia*. This incident enables us to proceed with confidence at a critical point in our present argument. The error of Dante, for which he, after passing through the seven penal regions, had yet to discharge a peculiar penance, was the unwary slip which carried him out of Theology into Philosophy. It was not deliberate on his part, he was somehow inveigled into it, whether by persons or by circumstances or both. He ought to have been more circumspect, he was no nestling but a full-fledged bird, when he allowed himself to be snared in the fowler's toils. The aucuparian figure at the end of the homily must not divert us from noting that it is prefaced by a warning against the Siren's strain, which makes

CANTO
XXXI.

it easy to see that this and the "pargoletta" and the "donna gentile" of the *Vita Nuova* are all one and the same thing, namely, *donna Filosofia*.

This is the "via non vera" of XXX. 130; this is what in our third piece is called "quella scuola che hai seguitata" and "vostra via"; and it is the antithesis of "la verace via" which the wanderer had abandoned before the opening of the Poem. The lack of vigilance through which he had listened to the Siren, and his soul had been taken in the snare of the fowler, is the same as that somnolence through which he had lost the true way (*Inf. i. init.*) without being able to account for it. These figures all point to one and the same error, which was the source of that trouble out of which springs the whole action of the *Commedia*.

2. THE TWO NATURES OF THE GRIPHON.

Line 81, Ch' è sola una persona in due nature. This line is very important, as being that upon which is based the current interpretation of the Griphon. It is supposed to be decisive, and to exclude all question; as if there were but one single person of whom this could be said. It did not however prevent Didron from offering another interpretation in his *Christian*

Iconography. The current interpretation was repugnant to him, and he would have the Griphon to mean the Pope, who is both priest and king, and so one single person in two natures; he is both eagle and lion. In his character of Pontiff, as an eagle he hovers in the heavens; as lion or king he walks upon the earth in strength and power. To the common interpretation which makes the Griphon an emblem of Christ he objects the manifest impropriety, and he even doubts whether Dante can be freed from the charge of irreverence in harnessing the Pope to the Car of the Church. This author writes as if the two interpretations already noticed were alternatives, and that there could be no further instance of one sole person in two natures. And yet it is quite obvious that the same phrase can be used, in due measure and degree, of ordinary men. In the last chapter of the *De Monarchia*, Dante has erected this fact into a premiss, dwelling on the twofold constitution of man, who is composed of two natures, the earthly and the spiritual; and upon this twofold nature he builds the crowning argument for his ideal government, which consists of a twofold monarchy, that of the Emperor for things temporal, and that of the Pope for things eternal. And this is the sense in which it is said of the

CANTO
XXXI.

CANTO
XXXI.

Griphon that he is one sole person in two natures.

It may seem at first sight to favour the current interpretation that the beauty of Beatrice was seen to be enhanced as she was looking at the Griphon. That the emblem of Christ might kindle thoughts which would make her look more beautiful would furnish an excellent sense: but that is not sufficient: our concern is to ascertain what is in fact the meaning in this place. The poet means that she is contemplating the condition of the common laity, and considering their potential capacities and how such capacities might be developed. She is considering the simple folk much as the good wife in Proverbs xxxi considers a field, to see what might be made of it: "She considereth a field and buyeth it." Only the aim of the consideration is different; it is more like that in Hebrews x. 24: "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works." The operation of this generous reverie makes a beautiful lady outshine herself. This is the first of a series of passages in which the increasing beauty of Beatrice is recorded (e.g. *Paradiso*, viii. 15; x. 37; xiv. 79; xviii. 55; xxi. *init.*; xxiii. 46; xxvii. 94; xxx. 19).

3. THE FOUR NYMPHS.

CANTO
XXXI.

Noi siam qui ninfe, e nel ciel siamo stelle;
Pria che Beatrice discendesse al mondo,
Fummo ordinate a lei per sue ancelle.

XXXI. 106-108.

This is a singular passage. It is not on the same plane with the general course of the allegory in which Beatrice is the chief figure. It recalls the fifteenth Sonnet of the *Vita Nuova*, which says—

Ella sen va, sentendosi laudare,
Benignamente d'umiltà vestuta;
E par che sia una cosa venuta
Di cielo in terra a miracol mostrare.

But that is all on the level of allegory, whereas here the name of Beatrice is flatly used as if it were a recognized name for the Church.

The meaning is not obscure. The Four Virtues say: "In this place we are nymphs, and in the sky we are stars; before Beatrice descended to the world, we were appointed to serve her as her handmaidens." As nymphs they appear on the present scene, as stars they appear in the first Canto of the *Purgatorio*. All this is after the manner of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: but now the tone changes to something as it were historical, namely, that before the Church came into the world the Moral Virtues were her servants in

CANTO
XXXI.

preparing the minds of men to receive her (vide *De Mon.* iii. 16. 57). This must certainly be the meaning intended, and if so, we have the name Beatrice flatly used as an equivalent for the Church. And this is the more surprising, because it breaks forth suddenly out of an atmosphere of reserve. Nowhere else in the *Commedia* is Beatrice manifestly set forth as emblematic of the Church. This signification appears boldly in the *Vita Nuova*, as where it is said of her, that she alone was wanting to complete the perfection of heaven. But it would seem that her sphere is more contracted in the *Commedia*, as if after the publication of the *Vita Nuova* the poet had discovered that he could not sustain in Beatrice so very exalted a position. There were obvious embarrassments: for instance, he could not have represented his pilgrim as espoused to Beatrice if Beatrice were the Church whose Bridegroom is Christ, and therefore at the outset (*Inf.* ii) he assigns to her a subaltern eminence in the third grade: Mary, Lucia, Beatrice. In the *Commedia* she is not frankly (ἀπλῶς) the Church, but Heavenly Wisdom, Divine Philosophy, which is the same as Theologia, the spiritual science which has its ultimate foundation, not in the five senses, but in Faith. Here, however, in this place for once, her head is exalted (like Dame

Philosophy in Boethius), and her stature passes beyond the clouds.

CANTO
XXXI.

4. THE TWO GOVERNMENTS.

La doppia fiera dentro vi raggiava,
Or con uni or con altri reggimenti.

XXXI. 122-3.

Of the problematical passages which concern the Griphon, this is the third, and it is perhaps the most decisive as a test of the poet's meaning. It leads immediately up to the culminating event of the Earthly Paradise. The reflexion of the Griphon in the emerald eyes of Beatrice results in a preternatural phenomenon. For while the monster stands there in his own rigid shape as before, his reflex image varies so strangely from the original, that the poet cannot contain his amazement at the marvel of it.

The interpretation of this palmary passage is so warped by the false hypothesis, that Longfellow, who for the most part strives to be verbally faithful, is quite unable to keep his footing here. His rendering is as follows :—

Or con uni, or con altri reggimenti.

Now with the one, now with the other nature.

This version represents the prevalent if not indeed the only current interpretation of these lines. According to this, the two natures represented by

CANTO
XXXI.

the symbol of the Griphon were in the reflexion so discriminated as to exhibit now the divine and now the human nature. But this view raises two serious difficulties.

In the first place, it is not easy to imagine by what similitude the Divine Nature could be represented to the eye, and represented so intelligibly that the pilgrim saw, and understood, and rejoiced. That is one difficulty in the way of the current interpretation. And there is another. For on this view Beatrice would appear to be contemplating the mystery of the Incarnation.

Here it is necessary to observe that the great Poem moves with an increasing purpose and an orderly progress; and we are yet very far from the moment when such a theme could be introduced. We are hardly arrived at the threshold of intellectual theology, and we are distant by a long tract of thirty-five cantos from the graduated and reverential approach to that mystery, which has been most unseasonably thrust into this place by the pressure of a false hypothesis.

These substantial objections are emphasized by a recalcitrant text, to which the current interpretation offers most unreasonable violence. There is no kind of excuse for making the word *reggimenti* (governments) signify "natures"; unless a false hypothesis constitutes an excuse. The only

other occurrence of the word is in *Purgatorio* XVI. 128, where it is used for the two governments of priest and king. And it has the same meaning here. So wonderful was the transforming power of the Emeralds, that they translated, not reflected, the Griphon, displaying as his equivalent *in posse* august human figures, now of priest and now of king. This rests upon a figure which occurs twice in the Apocalypse (i. 6; v. 10), to express the transforming and elevating power of the Gospel.

CANTO
XXXI.

The real subject of the meditation of Beatrice is the faithful laity, the plain untutored folk who accept the Gospel from their teachers, and contribute little from their own minds beyond the instinctive recognition of spiritual truth. On these simple folk she is gazing with emerald eyes, that is to say, with eyes of Hope, and she sees the lay people, not as they appear to the casual observer, but in all the fullness of their potential and ultimate development. The mass of day labourers and mechanic artisans are yet to be, what Dante himself has been dubbed by Virgil, kings and priests.

The generous anticipations of Beatrice are pictured in her eyes, and the pilgrim reads them there. He sees the symbol of the Griphon translated in the eyes of Hope.

CANTO True hope is swift, and flies with swallow's wings,
XXXI. Kings it makes gods, and meaner creatures kings.

Richard the Third, v. 2.

He sees and he understands, and he rejoices with insatiable joy. He rejoices in the hope of seeing the simplest folk raised to his own level. By this divine transport, he is found to be made perfect in love (at least in respect of his neighbour) and his probation has reached its term.

Showing in their action the superiority of their rank, the Three other nymphs, who had been standing aloof observant, now came forward with the exulting movement of a joyous dance. The Four it was who had brought the pilgrim to the place where he stands, but now he is taken up by the Three. They plead for him with Beatrice, beseeching her to reward his toil by revealing to him her second beauty. The concluding lines describe the spiritual espousal of the pilgrim with Heavenly Wisdom, and the ecstasy of this moment marks the greatest epoch in the whole course of the *Commedia*, saving only that in which the Vision is finally lost in excess of light. Intimations have crossed our path from time to time that events were tending to such a solemnization, but the course of true love was

somewhat rudely interrupted by the disciplinary reproof of Beatrice, and at length the consummation overtakes us with the surprise of some strange unexpected transporting happiness.

CANTO
XXXI.

“Wisdom exalteth her children, and layeth hold of them that seek her. . . . For at the first she will walk with him by crooked ways, and bring fear and dread upon him, and torment him with her discipline, until she may trust his soul, and try him by her laws. Then will she return the straight way unto him, and comfort him, and show him her secrets.”—Ecclus. iv.

Henceforward the relations between the pilgrim and Beatrice enter upon a new phase. Her distant reserve is changed for intimacy; she will talk with him openly and explicitly, and her smiles shall assure him of her love. He has however not yet reached to the highest and nearest relation to her: more is promised in the next Canto as reserved for the future.

Hitherto we have seen this Procession in the light of a bridal ceremony, but it has another phase. Presently it will appear as the march of the Church, the primitive Church, with Beatrice as the symbol of Wisdom, and the Griphon as that of the simple folk. This signification unfolds itself in the next Canto.

THE FIFTH CANTO OF THE
EARTHLY PARADISE.

PURGATORIO XXXII.

Dante continued gazing at Beatrice like a man who would satisfy a long-sustained thirst by excessive draughts: all other faculties were lost in one eager gaze till he was roused by a voice from the Three nymphs which simply said "Too fixed!"

At first his eyes were so dazzled that he could not see objects about him, but as sight returned he perceived that the column had begun to wheel about to the right, and that it was moving with the sun and the seven lights full in its face.

The standards with the four and twenty elders had executed the new movement, before the pole of the Car had begun to turn; then the nymphs took their places right and left, and the Griphon drew the Car, but so that not a feather of him stirred.

The Fair Lady and Statius and Dante followed at the right wheel of the Car. Thus marching to a tune angelic through the high-arched and desolate wood, at the end of about three bowshots, Beatrice alighted from off the Car.

A murmur ran through the whole band, which

said "Adamo!" and then they surrounded a tree which had been spoiled of flowers and foliage in every branch. Its shroud, which the higher it reached the wider it spread, was lofty enough to have been a marvel in the woods of the Indians.

CANTO
XXXII.

"Blessed art thou, O Gryphon, who dost not pluck with thy beak this tree so sweet to the taste, because bad pains of colic have come thereby." Thus cried they around that tree, and the animal of double birth made answer: "For so is preserved the seed of all the just." Then he turned to the pole which he had drawn, and brought it to the foot of the stripped tree, and there he left bound what had originally grown there. The contact affected that tree as our earthly trees are affected by the sun in time of spring. It made the buds to swell, and the tender foliage to put forth with vernal tint, and so the pillaged branches renewed themselves. Then followed a hymn to one of those tunes which are not heard here upon earth, and Dante fell asleep, he knew not how. He only knew that he was brusquely roused by a voice that cried "Rise, what doest thou?"

As on the Mount Peter and John and James were overcome with sleep and roused by a voice that has broken deeper slumbers, and woke up to great change around them, Moses and Elijah

CANTO
XXXII.

gone, and their Master's raiment shifted: so Dante turned, and saw that kind lady standing over him, who erst was his conductress through the stream; and all in doubt he said "Where is Beatrice?" And she: "Beneath the renovated bough, behold her seated on its very root. Behold the company about her; the rest attend the Griphon on their upward way, with sweeter and with deeper song."

Whether she added more he knew not, for now his eyes were filled with her whose presence excluded every other concern; she sate by herself on the very ground, as if left there in charge of the Car, which the Griphon had fastened to the tree; in a circle round about her the seven nymphs formed a cloister, holding in their hand those luminaries which fear no wind from north or south.

"Here shalt thou for a little time be a dweller in the woods, and then shalt be with me for all time a citizen of that Rome whereof Christ is Roman. Therefore, to help the evil-living world, keep thine eyes upon the Car, and what thou seest, be sure thou write, on thy return." So Beatrice:—and the pilgrim who was wholly devoted to her service, gave mind and eyes to do her bidding.

Swift as lightning an eagle shot down through the tree, tearing the fresh foliage and even scathing the bark: with all his force he struck the Car,

and made it reel, like as a ship in a storm is tossed by the waves, now to starboard and now to larboard.

CANTO
XXXII.

Afterwards he saw adventure itself into the cradle of the triumphal vehicle a fox that seemed starving for lack of wholesome food: but on being charged by Beatrice with abominable crimes, it made off in headlong flight, as swift as ill-furnished bones would permit.

Afterwards, by the same way as erst it came, the eagle descended into the bed of the Car, and left it plumed with his own feathers. And a voice, as it were from a sorrowing heart, issued from the sky, saying: "My little bark, how ill art thou freighted!"

Next, the earth opened between the wheels of the Car, and thence a Dragon rose, which fixed its tail up through the Car: and like a wasp drawing back its sting, so he, drawing back his venomous tail, dragged out part of the floor, and went his way exulting.

Of what remained, just as a fertile soil covers itself with herbage, so from the plumage, which perhaps was offered with sincere and benevolent intention, were covered the two wheels and the pole in a shorter time, than a sigh would take in uttering.

Thus transformed the sacred structure put forth heads in various parts, three on the pole

CANTO
XXXII. and one at each corner. The three were horned like oxen, but the four had only one horn apiece; such a monster never yet was seen.

As if in firm and assured possession a shameless whore was seated upon it, and by her side a giant as asserting his hold upon her, and when she but cast her eyes upon the spectator, he belaboured her from head to foot; and in his jealous fury he dragged the Car across the forest till both it and the woman were hidden by the wood. So ends the Fifth Canto of the Earthly Paradise.

Matters especially demanding our attention in this Canto, are:—(1) The ten years thirst: (2) “Troppo fiso” in line 9: (3) the appearance of the Griphon in lines 26, 27: (4) the Tree of Knowledge: (5) the three tercets (lines 43–51) which are occupied with the Griphon: (6) the exit of the Griphon in line 89: (7) what happens while Beatrice holds court under the tree.

I. LA DECENNE SETE.

My eyes, that thirst to satisfy,
Which ten long years had made me dry,
So fixedly were bent,
All other sense was spent.

XXXII. 1–3.

This passage contains the most direct allusion

to the *Vita Nuova* that is found in the *Commedia*. But it is only a more overt expression of that affinity which is everywhere tacitly implied. When the name of Beatrice first appears in the *Commedia* at *Inferno* II. 70 ("Io son Beatrice"), it is assumed that all men know who Beatrice is, because all have read the *Vita Nuova*. The reference here is to the thirtieth chapter, where the author dates her death in the year 1290. It has been thought that this furnishes an argument for the identification of Dante's Beatrice with Beatrice Portinari, and there might be some force in this if it were a known fact that Beatrice Portinari died in that year. But all we know about this lady is limited to the circumstance that she was a married woman in 1287, when her father made his will, which is extant. This does not help us to decide whether the date of 1290 is real or fictitious; and that is the fundamental problem in this discussion. We can say of "la decenne sete," that it harmonizes with that date, for the *Commedia* purports to be dated in 1300. The *Vita Nuova* and the *Commedia* are—in Dogberry's native English—"both in a tale"; but that coalition will not reach far towards establishing historical evidence in this case, seeing we know that the date 1300 is of an imaginary nature.

CANTO
XXXII.

CANTO
XXXII.

The allegorical value is more manifest than the historical. The period of Dante's estrangement from Theology and his devotion to Philosophy which is thus indicated, corresponds to the decade from his twenty-fifth to his thirty-fifth year, a period which bears the internal marks of probability. Being now reawakened to the claims of Theology, his revived ardour is proportioned to the length of time which it has cost him to discover that the rewards of Philosophy will not fully answer his expectations. Her seat is on a pleasant hill which is reputed to be the source and cause of all delight; and she herself has charms which are very wonderful; but when compared to Beatrice there is one thing in which she is found to be wanting—she has not those emerald eyes!

2. TROPPO FISO.

We saw in the first of these Cantos, that the poet was careful to indicate the stage of progress, lest the reader should suppose that perfection was already attained. So here: the Three Nymphs disapprove the self-abandonment with which the pilgrim drinks in the second beauty of Beatrice. There is no moderation, no proportion, no reserve of the heart for still higher pleasures. This entire devotion to Beatrice

is the note of his present stage of progress, as indicated in lines 92 and 106. CANTO
XXXII.

By the time he arrives in the fourth heaven, a change has taken place in him:—

Never was heart of man so wholly brought
Through heavenly love and through desire unmixed
To render up to God its every thought
As mine, soon as these words my bosom thrilled:
And all my affection was on Him so fixed,
That Beatrice no more my spirit filled.
Nor ought displeased was she; but as she smiled,
Such brightness from her radiant eyes came down,
My mind from that sole object was beguiled.

Paradiso, X. 55-63; tr. Wright.

3. THE GRIPHON'S IMPASSIBILITY.

Back to the wheels those ladies pressed:
The Griphon moved his burden blest,
Yet of his feathers all
None stirred he therewithal.

XXXII. 25-27.

The head of the column is wheeling round, and the movement is so carefully described, that it awakens in us an apprehension of its significance: by the elaborate detail of a right-about evolution we are prepared to expect a new departure of a marked kind. When it comes to the turn of the Griphon to support this

CANTO
XXXII.

movement, his appearance is made the subject of a remarkable observation, which furnishes our fourth test-passage for determining the symbolic value of the Griphon. He moved the sacred Car in such a manner that not a feather of him fluttered.

This is commonly taken to mean, that Christ guides the Church without visible effort or show of external means. Here we must observe that in commenting on such a poem as the *Divina Commedia*, it is not sufficient to find some plausible analogy for each figure and symbol as it comes up. The commentator has not fulfilled his task when he has merely shown that a recognized analogy exists between his explanation and the symbol to be interpreted. He has to show that the proffered explanation falls in with the drift of the poem, and that it plainly appears to be what the poet intended. Keeping this in view, I will offer a very different explanation.

Not a feather of the Griphon stirs, because he has no sympathy with the new departure, he complies mechanically, but exhibits no emotion of interest in a movement which is directed towards the Tree of Knowledge. Or, more generally, it may be taken to indicate blank simplicity and passive obedience. Either way, this interpretation has the advantage of assign-

ing to the Griphon a character which is maintained in the sequel. CANTO
XXXII.

And it may also (I think) claim to be supported by a simile in the *Paradiso*:—

Tal volta un animal coperto broglia
 Sì che l' affetto convien che si paia
 Per lo seguir che face a lui l' invoglia.
XXVI. 97.

It chanceth oft some animal bewrays,
 Through the sleek covering of his furry coat,
 The fondness, that stirs in him, and conforms
 His outside seeming to the cheer within.

Cary's Translation.

Our interpretation of the immobility of the Griphon's coat as representing impassibility, seems to receive countenance from this passage.

4. THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE.

A paragraph of three tercets describes the arrival at the Tree of Knowledge and its shape and appearance, and what happened there. When the new march had proceeded to a distance of three bow-shots, Beatrice alighted from the Car. We cannot suppose this incident to be without significance. The three bow-shots seem to mean the first three centuries of Christianity, for the bridal procession now slides into a figure of the primitive Church, which in the fourth century

CANTO
XXXII. came to the front in literature, when Lactantius and Jerome and Ambrose and Augustine flourished.

The murmur "Adamo" which ran through the company determines the identity of the tree with that of Eden, but it does not exclude the possibility that the notion of Empire (which commentators see in it) may also have been intended by the poet. The elders and the rest of the company surround the tree, which appeared to have been robbed of flowers and foliage in every branch; and the branches spread the wider as the tree rose higher, and it was vastly high. This height and inverted conformation were intended to convey an important signification, as is intimated in the next Canto, line 64 ff.

5. THE GRIPHON AT THE TREE.

And now follow three tercets about the Griphon, forming a paragraph which is rich in suggestion. When they have encircled the tree they address the Monster:—

"O Griphon, blest art thou, that ne'er
 "With beak that tempting tree wilt tear,
 "The taste whereof will make
 "The bowels sore to ache."

XXXII. 43-45.

The application of these words to Christ is

so hopeless, that commentators here have fallen back on the idea that the tree means the Empire, and then they quote the words of Jesus: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's"—as evidence of his respect for the Roman Empire. But who can be satisfied with such an explanation? Let us only ask ourselves this question:—Is it conceivable that Dante could have made prophets and apostles offer to Christ such a speech as this by way of a beatification? It sounds like the parental voice approving and encouraging a good child that has been at large in a garden and has plucked no fruit.

CANTO
XXXII.

On the other hand, if the Griphon signifies the unlearned folk, then the sense is plain and appropriate. It may indeed be called a happiness for those who have not had a careful preparatory training, that they should not be captivated with a taste for knowledge of high things; for it is often seen that when people without competent education amass learning, they fail in the digestion of it, and drift into tortuous currents of thought, bringing confusion and pain. This interpretation agrees with what went before, and smooths the way for that which is to follow. We should here note the expression "*col becco*," which perhaps is not idle. When the uneducated aspire to understand great matters and go about

CANTO
XXXII.

to collect knowledge, they generally gather only the results and tips of learning, well figured by the leaves and flowers which a bird's beak might snap off. And as this happens continually, so the tree of knowledge is seen to be stript of flowers and foliage on every branch.

We now come to a passage for which a reasonable explanation is not to be found in the commentators. The general tribute of approbation is responded to by the Griphon in the only speech which is assigned to him, and it occupies one line. I quote it, with Longfellow's rendering:—

Sì si conserva il seme d'ogni giusto.
Thus is preserved the seed of all the just.

The impracticability of the received view about the Griphon is here very glaring. In order to fit this saying to the personage of Christ, the commentators quote: "For thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness":—a sentence which offers some slight and superficial likeness without any internal affinity whatever, and which, when matched with our text, produces only a jingle.

The interpreter of Dante is hardly excusable

if he ever forgets the existence of a rhetorical figure which is called by the venerable and classical name of Antonomasia. It was a favourite figure with Dante as it was with the historian of the Norman Conquest. The latter having occasion to allude to Glastonbury Tor, he did not call it by the familiar name, but gave a description instead, thus: "that island mount of the Archangel which shelters the earliest home of Christianity in Britain" (*Norman Conquest*, vol. iv. p. 130). In like manner Dante introduces Aristotle as "the master of those who know" (*il Maestro di color che sanno*, *Inf.* iv. 131), without mention of his name. So without name he brings in Adam as "that man who never was born" (*Par.* vii. 26): Ruth as "her who was great-grandmother of the psalmist" (*Par.* xxxii. 10): David as "the singer who for dole of sin said *Miserere mei*" (*ibid.*): and Raphael as "him who made Tobias whole again" (*Par.* iv. 48)¹.

¹ Many more like instances may be traced by a circumspect use of Mr. Paget Toynbee's Index to the Oxford *Dante*. In that Index he has divided his references to persons in such a manner as to sever those which contain the name from those in which the person is otherwise indicated; and of this ingenious device he has given due notice in the proper place. Moreover, the reader who is upon this quest should consult the same Index under the words: *Colei*, *Colui*, *Quei*, *Quel*, *Quella*, &c.

CANTO
XXXII.

It is in this vein that Dante to indicate Faith has used a phrase: "the seed of all the just"; for the New Testament teaches that Faith is the germ of all righteousness. Then the sentiment of the Griphon's brief speech amounts to this: that for simple folk who desire to hold fast their faith, it is better not to meddle with learned controversies: a favourite apophthegm with untutored believers in every generation. The truth which it contains is partial and relative; and accordingly it fits the *borné* character of the speaker as the mouthpiece of the humble and ignorant laity. But to suppose this an utterance *ex personâ Christi* is to render all reasonable interpretation impossible.

When Dante uses an obscure epigrammatic expression, he has a way of providing for its illustration which is so unobtrusive and unforced that it might be deemed merely natural and undesigned, were it not for an aptness and frequency which suggest the refinement of Art. The obscure and misunderstood phrase "seed of all the just" is repeated in a more explicit and concrete manner in *Paradiso* XII, where Bonaventura in his eulogy of Dominic says that he asked of the Pope no perquisites to enrich himself, but licence to fight for the Faith; only, instead of the word Faith, the poet antonomastically puts "the seed

from which thou art now surrounded by four-and-twenty seedlings" (ll. 95-96).

CANTO
XXXII.

In the previous Canto there is an obscure expression of the same type, which has received from the commentators the same sort of random annotation as the Griphon's speech. Beatrice says (*Purg.* xxxi. 46): "Lay aside grief and listen": only for grief stands the antonomastic equivalent "the seed of weeping"; and the commentators are content to illustrate this by quoting "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy"—an idea which certainly is present in the region of the passage, and therefore the more likely to confuse the reader's mind.

Here we might leave the case of Antonomasia, were it not that the Griphon's speech is introduced by an example of this figure, and one which has immediate claims on our attention. The Griphon is antonomastically designated as "l' animal binato," and here I find it convenient to quote Wright's translation as a warning example of the prevalent interpretation—

And He in whom the two-fold natures meet:
"Yea, so fulfilled all righteousness must be."

The compound "binato" represents "bis natus," and the simple meaning is "twice born"; an epithet which has been distorted under the

CANTO
XXXII.

pressure of the false hypothesis, because as it stands it is inapplicable to Christ. Of Him "bis natus" cannot be said, but it is highly appropriate to the body of the faithful, and is founded upon the evangelical doctrine of the New Birth.

After he has spoken, the Griphon relinquishes the triumphal Car.

The receiving of an address and the speaking in answer to it are not the only actions of a human quality that are assigned to the Monster. He separates himself from the pole, lays it up against the tree, and binds it thereto. This is a menial act, the act of a subordinate, and it recalls the service rendered by the Dwarf in the *Faerie Queene* to Una's knight. The relation of the Dwarf to Una is analogous to the relation of the Griphon to Beatrice; the Dwarf being generally understood to symbolize the undeveloped mind of the simple lay folk. If, as appears probable, Spenser took the idea from Dante's Griphon, then we may claim his suffrage for our interpretation of Dante's meaning.

The passages are in the First Canto of the *Faerie Queene*; and it may be noted, that the Dwarf also makes one speech, of about equal length with the Griphon's and characterized by the same timorous note:—

VI.

CANTO
XXXII.

Behind her farre away a Dwarfe did lag,
 That lasie seemd in being ever last,
 Or wearied with bearing of her bag
 Of needments at his backe. . . .

.

XI.

At last resolving forward still to fare,
 Till that some end they finde or in or out,
 That path they take, that beaten seemd most bare,
 And like to lead the labyrinth about;
 Which when by tract they hunted had throughout
 At length it brought them to a hollow cave
 Amid the thickest woods. The Champion stout
 Eftsoones dismounted from his courser brave
 And to the Dwarfe awhile his needlesse spere he gave.

XII.

Be well aware, quoth then that Ladie milde,
 Least suddaine mischief ye too rash provoke:
 The danger hid, the place unknowne and wilde,
 Breedeth dreadfull doubts: Oft fire is without smoke,
 And perill without show: therefore your stroke,
 Sir knight, with-hold, till further triall made.
 Ah Ladie, (said he) shame were to revoke
 The forward footing for an hidden shade:
 Vertue gives her selfe light, through darknesse for
 to wade.

XIII.

Yea but (quoth she) the perill of this place
 I better wot then you, though now too late

CANTO
XXXII.

To wish you backe returne with foule disgrace,
Yet wisdomes warnes, whilst foot is in the gate,
To stay the steppe, ere forced to retrate.
This is the wandring wood, this Errours den,
A monster vile, whom God and man does hate:
Therefore I rede beware. Fly, fly (quoth then
The fearefull Dwarfes) this is no place for living men.

6. THE GRIPHON'S EXIT.

We now come to the last of the passages concerning the Griphon. The pilgrim does not witness his exit, being asleep when it took place. Roused by the Fair Lady's call, he learns by her report that the Procession has broken up, and that Beatrice is sitting under the Tree surrounded by the Nymphs, while the rest are following the Griphon on his upward way.

"And all in doubt I said "O where

"Is Beatris?" "Behold her there,

"Set the tree's root upon

"Beneath its leaves new-grown.

"Behold" she said "her train attending;

"The Griphon with the rest ascending;

"With song of sweeter sound

"They rise and more profound."

XXXII. 85-90.

This ascent is not to be identified with the Ascension of Christ, except in the sense of the Collect which prays that as we believe Him "to

have ascended into the heavens, so we may also in heart and mind thither ascend." The meaning would seem to be that the elevating discipline of the ordinary Christian life, supported by the Scriptures, is (as Bunyan phrased it) "a pilgrimage towards the upper regions." His departure is accompanied

CANTO
XXXII.

Con più dolce canzone e più profonda
—a tender and pathetic dismissal, suggested apparently by Psalm lxxiv. 22, which in our English Psalter sounds thus—

"O let not the symple go away ashamed, but let the poore and nedy geue praise vnto thy name."

There is, however, an expression in the text which might seem to favour the false hypothesis. The Elders are said to have gone *after* the Griphon, which might seem to indicate his superiority to them.

Gli altri dopo il grifon sen vanno suso.

XXXII. 89.

But this is to be understood according to that of St. Paul in 1 Cor. iii. *fn.*:—"All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours." And again in 2 Cor. iv. 5: "Ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."

But there is another mode of interpretation

CANTO
XXXII.

which invites attention. Of Peter's vision it is said in Acts x. 16 that it "was received up again into heaven," and this is a mere exit, a disappearance rather than a dismissal. We do not in that case follow it in our minds, or ask what it had to do in heaven. But we cannot quite so easily part with the *personnel* of this vision, and indeed we seem to be prohibited from doing so by the third line of the tercet: "Con più dolce canzone e più profonda." This seems to have a pathetic meaning, it makes us think of *E profundis clamavi ad te, Domine*. A company so dismissed we follow with our thoughts, we retain an interest in them.

I think the poet's meaning is that they are gone away by an arduous path and with deep heart-stirring tones of song. A similar phrase is used in Virgil's description of Lucia's ascent with the sleeping pilgrim, and there the poet is careful to indicate that the ascent was made on foot:—

Sen venne suso, ed io per le sue orme.
Sordello, and those gentles there
Remained: and when the day was clear,
She carried thee above;
I in her steps did move.

IX. 58-60.

Having now seen the last of the Griphon, I will offer a concluding observation. In the ethical

sphere he is the emblem of Simplicity, and he stands in contrast to Geryon, the emblem of Fraud. It is hard to account for Dante's choice of name for the monster of *Inferno* XVII, since there is nothing in the myth of Geryon to invite such use of it. May it have been suggested by "Grifone," from which by anagram (one consonant excepted) "Gerion" may be spelt?

CANTO
XXXII.

7. BEATRICE IN HER COURT.

The last sixty-seven lines of the Canto (94-160) present a very impressive scene. Beatrice is seated under the tree, upon the very earth, in attitude as if guarding the Car which the Grifphon had fastened to the tree. This marks an elevation in the scale of symbolism; she is now the guardian spirit of the Church, and so no less than the symbol of the Church herself, at least for the approaching function. She is surrounded with a Court which is composed of the seven nymphs, the four Moral Virtues and the three Christian Virtues, bearing the Lamps of the Spirit of God. A worthy Court for a spiritual Head; and a contrast to the court of Rome "that now is."

Seated in official state she is endowed with the spirit of prophecy, which she exercises in predicting to the poet his future blessedness, and

CANTO
XXXII. to this promise is attached the charge of writing
that which was about to be revealed to him by
vision :—

“Here whiles provincial shalt thou be,
 “Thence everlastingly with me
 “Thou unto Christ shalt come,
 “A Roman of his Rome.
 “Wherefore, the naughty world to cure,
 “Mark well the chariot, and be sure
 “Thou write, what here thou learn,
 “When yonder thou return.”

XXXII. 100-105.

The first of these tercets appears like the complement to the Espousals of the last Canto : it contains a promise of endless union between herself and the pilgrim in a common fellow-citizenship with Christ in the true and free Rome. The figure is based upon a reminiscence of Galatians iv. 25 : “Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free.”

But how to understand what is said of his condition in the interval? “Qui sarai tu poco tempo silvano.” Clearly “silvano” is antithetic to “cive,” and this seems to have suggested “provincial” to Mr. Shadwell : and this is perhaps as much of the meaning as could be got into an exact translation of restricted compass. For it is a highly sublimated passage. It has one con-

spicuous feature in common with the centre-piece of XXX, namely, a highly-accentuated "qui." The CANTO
XXXII. HERE in that place emphasizes the superiority of the "monte santo" over the "dilettoso monte" of the opening Canto: and in like manner the adverb in this place sets up this happy forest as a contrast to the bewildering wood of the same Canto. The repetition of this little adverb furnishes two strong links between the Six Cantos and the Seventh which has gone before. The meaning is as if she had said: You were fond of ranging the woods, HERE you shall for a brief space enjoy the pleasures of a wood-ranger, not "in wandering mazes lost."

There are two other texts in the *Inferno* with which this tercet has intimate relations. In Canto X Farinata predicts the poet's exile, and the same destiny is again intimated to him by Brunetto Latini in Canto XV. To Brunetto he answers that he has heard the like before, that he takes note of both warnings, but reserves the subject for the comment of a lady who will know all about it, if only he can reach her. Commentators have supposed that the expectation thus raised is fulfilled, not by Beatrice, but by Cacciaguida in *Paradiso* XVII. But this tercet covers the question of his destiny very sufficiently, and all the more nobly for overlooking terrestrial

CANTO
XXXII.

details, and it surely is the passage which stands as third to those two. Indeed, it is a fine example of that method of triplicity in which Dante has repeatedly left us a valuable aid to interpretation.

The injunction to write what he shall presently see, which occupies the next tercet, has been well characterized by Schlosser (*Dante*, p. 242), as Dante's call to the prophetic office. The vision which he was about to see concerned the interests of the Church, of which he was thus commissioned to stand forth as the spokesman and champion.

And these two tercets are bound together by the closest of links. "Però, in pro del mondo che mal vive." The promise of endless union with Beatrice in Christ, is made the ground of his obligation to the duty of testifying to a world that lieth in wickedness. The great purpose of the poet seems to begin to open itself before us, and to the praise of his sustained consistency be it said, that in embryo it is all found in the first sonnet of the *Vita Nuova*.

The instruction to write is emphasized in Dante's manner, by a threefold repetition with varying aspects. He touches on this duty again in XXXIII. 52 and 76. That on his return he is to write what he has seen is an established purpose, and all that he sees and hears henceforward is matter for his Message. He consults his

ancestor Cacciaguida, not whether he shall write, but whether he shall put certain things into his book. The great invocation in the last Canto is for inspiration to write with profit to mankind.

CANTO
XXXII.

On the details of the vision itself, it is the less necessary to dwell, because the meaning is in the main well agreed upon. Whatever the fox and the dragon may symbolize, it is clear that the incidents (as a whole) represent the adverse fortunes of the Church from the persecuting Emperors down to Philip the reigning king of France, the giant who belabours the shameless woman, and who drags off the Car until it is hidden in the wood. As this purports to be seen in 1300, it is a poetical prophecy of events which came to pass in 1303, when Philip's emissaries seized the proud pontiff at Anagni; and in 1305 when he caused the Papal See to be transferred from Italy into his own dominions. It is a relief to find something in these Cantos about which there is no room for difference of opinion.

THE SIXTH CANTO OF THE
EARTHLY PARADISE.

PURGATORIO XXXIII.

Filled with grief, the nymphs in alternate choirs, now three now four, sing the 79th Psalm *Deus venerunt gentes* as a sorrowful dirge for the shameful abuses of the Church on earth, while Beatrice listened with an afflicted mien which could hardly have been exceeded by Mary at the Cross.

DEVS VENERVNT GENTES.

O God the Heathen are come into thy inheritaunce : thy holy tēple haue they defyled, ād made Jerufalem an heape of ftones.

The deed bodyes of thy feruauntes haue they geuen to be meate, vnto the foules of the ayre, and the flesh of thy faynctes vnto the beastes of the lande.

Their blood haue they shed lyke water on euery fyde of Jerufalem, and there was no man to burye them.

We are become an opē shame vnto oure enemies, a very scorne and deryfyon vnto them that are rounde aboute vs.

Lorde, how longe wylt thou be angrie ? shall thy geloufy burne lyke fyre for euer ?

Poure out thyne indignaciō vpon the Heathen that haue not knowne the, and vpon the kyngdomes that haue not called vpon thy name.

For they haue deuoured Jacob, and layed waste his dwellynge place.

Here we have the first half-articulate emotional expression of those sentiments which are evoked in all who are of the true Church at sight of the degradation of ecclesiastical institutions. A more collected estimate of the situation follows from the mouth of Beatrice who, burning with the fiery indignation of God, now stands up to comfort and to teach. Her text is John xvi. 16; and the mere recital of it appeals to the ready intelligence of her hearers, and says, that in this speech of the Master lies the solution of the gigantic problem. Though for mysterious reasons He goes away, He will not always be absent; and even now there are preparations afoot for the renewal of that vitality by which His presence is seen in the Church. The march which she forthwith directs is animated by this anticipation.

She means that her journey with the pilgrim is to result in a quickening of spiritual life in the Church. It certainly means nothing less than this, and it implies that Dante had a call to speak as a prophet of the Lord. What indeed does the whole Vision point to, if not to the commission of a prophet? That Dante felt himself charged with a dispensation of new religious light to his contemporaries, is abundantly manifest up and down the Sacred Poem, and it is formulated in words that need little

CANTO
XXXIII. of the interpreter's aid, in *Paradiso* XXXIII.
67-75.

The conference which now follows is preliminary to that course of illumination which is the business of the *Paradiso*; and it is opened by Beatrice with encouragements to Dante to take up his part in the closer relations now existing between them; and also with chidings to awaken his intelligence and rouse his mind to receive new light. The prominent place given to the prophecy about Henry of Luxembourg shows that practical politics were included in his message to the world, as he conceived it. The hints about the symbolism of the previous Canto rather pique than satisfy curiosity, and the instruction to report things with apocalyptic mystery as he had received them, is brought about very dexterously.

The expostulation (lines 82-84) on the too high flight of Beatrice's discourse, elicits two important speeches. The first gives a reason:—"in order that you may perceive the distance between my teaching and the school which you have followed, a distance as wide as earth from the highest heaven." This passage is one of the first importance, and it is signalized as such, by the fact that it is the third of a triplet. The first utterance of the three is that tercet XXX. 73 ff.; the second and most explicit is contained in

three tercets beginning XXXI. 22 : and the difference indicated is that between Faith and Science, or to speak in terms of our own day, the difference between the teaching of the Church and that of schools like the Positivists or Agnostics. CANTO
XXXIII.

When, however, she had assigned this severe reason, and clinched it by an argument he had himself supplied in his feeble attempt at self-defence, she turned and comforted him with the assurance that the main point of his grievance was conceded, and that henceforward her speech should be as direct and plain as his capacity would admit. This recalls John xvi. 25: "the time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs"—and it signalizes an essential distinction between the darkness of these Cantos and the illumination of the *Paradiso*.

The lines which touch this subject merit particular attention because they convey the poet's explanation, and, so to say, his apology for the obscure symbolism of the Six Cantos.

"But, since I see all petrified
"Thy sense, and with such colour dyed,
 "My speech may ne'er aright
 "Reach to thy dazzled sight,
"Still, if not writ, yet painted there,
"Shalt thou my word within thee bear,
 "Like to the palm-leaves wound
 "The pilgrim's staff around."

CANTO
XXXIII.

And I: "As wax that changeth not
 "The impress that from seal it got,
 "So doth thy word remain
 "Imprinted on my brain:
 "But wherefore from my sight so high
 "Doth your long looked for teaching fly?
 "Why doth thy helpful rede
 "Fail at my greatest need?"

.

"Yea, but henceforth in naked wise
 "My words shall come, and to thine eyes
 "Disclose such meed of light
 "As fits untutored sight."

XXXIII. 73-84 and 100-102.

The reason is because for the untutored mind symbols are easier to grasp than bare spiritual truth; the puzzle fixes attention and the symbol is retained in the memory while the spiritual faculty is growing and maturing. This explains the place of the symbolic Cantos which occupy the central region immediately after the severities of moral restoration, and before the approach to the progressive stages of intellectual attainment. We should not quit these paragraphs without observing that the poet has marked his sense of their high relative importance by hanging them upon line 73, the central line of the Canto.

Now we come to that which was the bourne of the movement from the Tree, namely the fount of Eunoë; and this fills the remainder of the Cantica, affording as it does the culminating joy of the Earthly Paradise. Dante asks Beatrice about it, and she bids him ask "Matilda." This is the more remarkable because she had recently charged him to ask questions of her, and now when he does so she refers him to Matilda. Promptly the Fair Lady takes up the matter, as reflecting upon her discharge of duty, and she vindicates herself as from the imputation of neglect. She had already given him this information, and it was not her fault if he had let it slip. Here then we learn that it belonged to her office to inform him about the perennial fountain of Lethe and Eunoë, and that in her physical description concerning the site and climate and waters and natural products of *la campagna santa* which fills space in Canto XXVIII, she was not (as it might have seemed) merely yielding compliance with a casual inquiry, but she was fulfilling a duty which appertained to her function, and which she had in fact put herself in the pilgrim's way in order to discharge.

Reflexion upon these data will quickly assure us that Matilda has a department of knowledge committed to her, and that in this dispensation she

CANTO
XXXIII.

CANTO
XXXIII.

is officially subaltern to Beatrice. In fact, Matilda's province is the knowledge belonging to the sphere of the Earthly Paradise, while the province of Beatrice is that which belongs to the Celestial Paradise. There is a remarkable passage in *De Monarchia*, iii. 16, which will help us here. "Providence has set before Man two ends for him to aim at; the happiness of this life, which is to be attained by the exercise of his own natural virtue, and this is figured by the Earthly Paradise: and the happiness of life eternal, which consists in the enjoyment of the Divine Presence, whereto man cannot rise by his own natural virtue unless it be aided by divine light, and this is what we are given to understand by the Celestial Paradise." It seems plain then that natural knowledge is the sphere of Matilda, in subordination to Beatrice, who dispenses only the knowledge of things divine.

And this accounts for the ancillary relation of the Fair Lady to Beatrice, in her ministrations to the pilgrim, which is observable throughout these Cantos. Here we may recall that in the *Vita Nuova* the subordination of another lady to Beatrice is a constant feature of the representation. It recurs in three several forms, and these are symmetrically distributed in the three compartments of that little medley, which is the *avant-courrier* of the *Divina Commedia*. On the second

occasion (*V. N.* 24) it is a lady of the name of Giovanna who is seen walking in advance of Beatrice, and Dante tells us that her name was so called after Giovanni, that is, John the Baptist, who was the precursor of the true Light. CANTO
XXXIII.

The Fair Lady, then who at her first appearance served to fill out the picture of the regained Paradise by the presence of that only creature in whom meet all the lines of terrestrial loveliness, is also, without inconsistency and in accordance with that principle of a plurality of senses which Dante announces in his Epistle to Can Grande, the symbol of earthly wisdom or Philosophy, as Beatrice is the symbol of heavenly wisdom or Theology.

It is not without significance that she remains nameless to the final scene, and that then her name is at length let drop as if by accident. But it is surely no accident;—the more we know of our cunning artificer, the less ready shall we be to set anything down as casual, which we meet with in his workmanship.

Why is she called Matilda? This is a question which must be faced, if only because it has been made so much of by commentators who would like to identify her with some one in history. But perhaps the motive of giving her a name is not to identify her with any historical

CANTO
XXXIII.

character; rather it is simply to make a person of her, a person of parts and passions, capable of complex action; and to prevent her being thought of as symbolizing abstract qualities like the characters in the *Romaunt of the Rose*. That in the choice of a name the poet thought of that eminent and devoted servant of the Church and friend of Gregory the Seventh, Matilda Countess of Tuscany, who died in 1115, is very likely, but if so, the intention probably went no further than just to make the one lady a namesake of the other. Not only her name but her nature also is kept for the last; it is the ideal servant of the medieval conception: Com' anima gentil &c. (xxxiii. 130).

The command of Beatrice to bring Dante to the water of Eunoë, has the effect of bringing Statius forward once more. Since we entered the Earthly Paradise, Statius has been little noticed, not more than just enough to keep us aware of his presence. By name he has been spoken of only once before now; this is the second and last time. The former mention (xxxii. 29) has no significance whatever, except to keep us in mind of him; whereas this last mention of him is full of significance, and reflects light upon the main design. Dante is commended to Matilda for the water of Eunoë, and as Matilda proceeds to obey, she picks up

Statius ὡς ἐν παρέργῳ with a gently imperious call—Come with HIM! a transaction which distinctly subordinates Statius. CANTO
XXXIII.

This subordination is not founded upon poetical superiority or any personal pretension on the part of Dante, but it is required by the nature and purpose of the whole representation, in which Dante appears as an extraordinary and singularly favoured visitor, by the side of Statius, who is just an ordinary passenger, and whose presence furnishes the measure of his companion's peculiar elevation.

In the Earthly Paradise it begins to appear with a clearness not revealed before that Dante is travelling upon some high and special errand. From the very brow of the mountain the two ancient poets had fallen behind, as we are made to perceive in XXVIII. 82, “E tu, che sei dinanzi, e mi pregasti”; and again at the close of that Canto, where Dante turns round to look them in the face and sees their smile at the Fair Lady's words.

Statius was passed through Lethe *sub silentio*, and he is found in Canto XXXII walking at the right wheel of the Car, in company with Dante and the Fair Lady. When Beatrice motions the order of march early in XXXIII, she at first ranges these three, Dante and the Fair Lady and Statius,

CANTO
XXXIII.

in a group behind herself; but she has not proceeded ten paces when she advances Dante to her side, and makes him her own companion, leaving Statius with the Fair Lady. At length, when Matilda humbly receives the commands of Beatrice to bring Dante to the fountain of Eunoë, she beckons Statius magisterially (*donnescamente*) with a "Vien con lui!"

"But yonder look to Eunoë's fount:
"Bring him thereto, and as thou art wont,
"His fainting power restore,
"And bid it live once more."
As noble soul, that leaves excuses,
And for his will another's chooses,
Soon as it shall appear,
By outward sign made clear,
Even so on me that fair one laid
Her hand, and moved along, and said
(As might high dame beseem)
To Statius "Come with him."

XXXIII. 127-135.

In this series of significant little incidents the effect (and doubtless the purpose) is to manifest the high favour in which he is held, for whom all these visions have been prepared, and who in these revelations has already received a prophet's charge. In all this Dante exalts not himself vain-gloriously, but, like St. Paul, he magnifies his office.

And it should be added further that all this with Dante is no poetic figment, but a profound reality:—he was conscious of a vocation he dared not refuse or elude, it was his sincere conviction—“a dispensation is committed to me—necessity is laid upon me—yea, w^he is unto me if I preach not.”

CANTO
XXXIII.

And after the manner of momentous transactions, it should not escape our notice that this contract is dated.

So went she on: and scarce, I ween,
Set earthward her tenth pace had been,
When from her eyes a stroke
Upon my eyes there broke:
And with calmed aspect “Come” said she
“Nearer, that if I speak with thee,
“Thou shalt be posted, where
“My word thou best may hear.”

XXXIII. 16-21.

As the three bow-shots in XXXII are three centuries, so the ten paces in XXXIII are ten centuries, and the statement is, that the tenth century after the third had not closed, that is, the year 1300 was yet running, when Dante was called to hear words of high import.

Here we part with Statius, who, though now fitted to rise higher, yet probably will tarry awhile in the Earthly Paradise, that seat of primitive innocence and happiness, in full enjoyment of the

CANTO
XXXIII.

felicity of that forest primeval, in fact a "silvano," as Dante himself will also be at no very distant day (xxxii. 100)—his joys meanwhile not dimmed but heightened by his thirst for deeper draughts of bliss, and always ready for the moment of his higher call.

The taste of Eunoë is the culminating joy of the Earthly Paradise, so long as things continue in their wonted course. But the passage of one who has arrived there by singular favour of God ("singular grado," *Purg.* viii. 67) has disturbed ordinary routine, and has introduced into the close of XXXI an event which partakes of the celestial. There was no room for a second ecstasy in these parts, and the poet will not attempt any description of his exalted delight at the taste of the waters of Eunoë; so he waives it off with the humorous pretext of having no more paper¹. He will not describe his emotions after the blessed beverage, he will only tell its effects in his restoration and renovation, in making him pure and disposed for

¹ Some authority (I forget who) has said that there is no humour in Dante, and this has been accepted as if it were a canon. I am glad to know that there is a counter-authority, namely Tennyson, who wrote as follows: "I dare not tell how high I rate humour, which is generally most fruitful in the highest and most solemn human spirits. Dante is full of it, and almost all the greatest have been pregnant with this glorious power."

rising to the stars. In joy, hope, and confident alacrity, the Seven Cantos end, which began in the helplessness of abject terror, little removed from the jaws of Despair.

SUMMARY.

These six Cantos are peculiarly rich in suggestions affording clues of interpretation for other parts of the *Commedia*. It may be useful if we here pass in review a few instances of this.

From XXIX-XXXI we learn Dante's code of symbolism in those important colours, White, Green, and Red; and not the code of signs merely, but also the weight which belongs to them in the exegesis. This source has supplied us with a most welcome train of thought in the *Inferno*, whereby the incubus of that member of the Poem is wonderfully relieved.

From XXX. 73-75 we gather the signification of the Mountain in *Inferno* I, "il diletto monte," and this is a valuable acquisition, because that Mountain is an organic member of the Allegory; and because without that observation the vital passage which is central to XXX could not be rightly understood.

In XXXII. 100 ff. we have found the missing Third part to the two predictions of Dante's future (*Inf.* x. 79-81 and xv. 90), which had

SUMMARY. never, I think, been identified before; it being tamely accepted by commentators that a reference to Beatrice might find its fulfilment in words by Cacciaguida.

One of the new lights we have gained by a study of these Cantos has shown us the reason of the three Cantos, *Paradiso* XXIV, XXV, XXVI, on Faith, Hope, and Charity.

One of the benefits of the closer study of these Six Cantos has been to increase our knowledge of the technique of Dante's symbolism, and our sense of its value as a factor in the interpretation. This has been the case not only as regards Colours, but also as regards Numbers. The numbers Six and Seven are found to play an important part in the structure, and to offer welcome aid in verifying our exegesis. We have seen that there are Six chief poets in *Inferno* IV, to which a Seventh is added in *Purgatorio* XXII. We have seen that there are Six conventional invocations, two in each Cantica, leading up to the Seventh, which is the serious Invocation and which forms the centre-piece of *Paradiso* XXXIII. These Six Cantos themselves find their Seventh in the First Canto of the poem. The Six visions of the *Vita Nuova* find their Seventh in the *Commedia*.

But what light have we gained from these Cantos towards the solution of that cardinal problem, the symbolism of the opening Canto of the Poem? Perhaps in the true answer to this question lies the master-key to the interpretation of the Whole. The wood, the sleep, the mountain; but first of all the Wood:—What does it symbolize? Error, perplexity, mistaken and abortive efforts to regain the true path—so much is manifest, and so much is set out or implied in every exegesis that is worth notice. But what was the cause of this bewilderment? There begins the division of opinion—that is the question which is wrongly answered, and which these Cantos enable us to answer right.

The cause is not to be sought in that moral disorder which results from an ill-regulated life in youth; because, if this were so, the whole of the rest of the poem would lack justification. What sense could there be in the selection of any one man for rescue from the vulgar demoralisation which is common to fools? What sense in setting a special mission on foot to deliver him, and to deliver him by a way never travelled before by mortal man, and that by a movement originating in the highest heaven? What sense could there be in the saying of Beatrice (xxx. 136) that this mighty process was the

SUMMARY. one remedy for his case? What sense in bringing forward one who had been recently lost in the pollutions of the world, and finding him worthy to be the spouse of Beatrice—and this in a poem which emphasizes the deep stain of sin, and affirms the necessity for an aeonian purgation? Could one who had so lately lain among the pots appear so suddenly with the wings of a dove that is covered with silver wings and her feathers like gold? Could Dante in one and the same poem represent himself as snatched from the toils of common vice, and transformed into a divinely-commissioned prophet, denouncing wickedness in high places and assuming to speak for God?

These Six Cantos compel us to infer that the Seventh, which stands forward in advance as the leader of the group, indicates a pilgrim lost in such perplexities as occur only to those who have begun well and who have kept high aims, moral and intellectual, continually before them. Such a man may lose his way in speculative mazes, theological and philosophical, especially if he be involved in political conflicts, and find himself in a situation where there is no path for an honest man, but wide openings for the unscrupulous—such desperate straits may tempt a high-minded man to renounce effort, lapsing into

apathy and torpor: — “Then have I cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency!” If our pilgrim was a prey to this bitter scepticism, then the “true path” which he had lost was that of faith in the moral government of God. That this was the poet’s meaning seems to be confirmed by two observations:—first that this would furnish a reasonable explanation of that fearful line—

Che non lasciò giammai persona viva;
Inferno, I. 27.

and secondly, that we could then understand how the survey of the divine judgments might be remedial to the sceptical and despondent soul.

The hearty and universal reception which was immediately accorded to the *Commedia* is unparalleled in the annals of Literature, and it cannot be accounted for (the remark is Cary’s) solely on the ground of its intrinsic excellence. Curiosity about the doom adjudged to remembered persons would certainly add a distinct element of interest, but this may very easily be overrated. In the bulk of instances this attraction had only a local root, and it was already shrunk by lapse of time when the poet died. The unwonted homage was shared by all the chief cities

SUMMARY. of Italy, and it dates from a time when Dante's person and reputation were fresh in memory ; and all this seems to testify that his moral character had always been without reproach. For the honour accorded to the *Commedia* was not merely the admiration extorted by the achievement of a great poem ; it was more like the reverence due to the message of a prophet. That this is no more than Dante himself claimed and anticipated, may be gathered from intimations up and down the poem, but it appears in a concentrated form in these Six Cantos of the Earthly Paradise.

J. E.

PURGATORIO.

CANTO VENTESIMOTTAVO.

VAGO già di cercar dentro e dintorno

La divina foresta spessa e viva,

Ch' agli occhi temperava il nuovo giorno,

4 Senza più aspettar lasciai la riva,

Prendendo la campagna lento lento

Su per lo suol che d' ogni parte oliva.

7 Un' aura dolce, senza mutamento

Avere in sè, mi feria per la fronte,

Non di più colpo, che soave vento ;

10 Per cui le fronde, tremolando pronte,

Tutte e quante piegavano alla parte

U' la prim' ombra gitta il santo monte :

CANTO XXVIII.

EAGER to search around, within,
That forest thick, alive, divine,
 Whereby the new day's light
 Was tempered to my sight,
I waited not, but left the shore,
And slowly moved the champaign o'er,
 That underneath my feet
 Allwhere breathed odours sweet.
A gentle breeze, that ever seemed
Steady and still, about me streamed,
 And on my forehead broke,
 As wind of softest stroke.
Whereat the trembling branches leant,
And all obediently were bent,
 Whither its morning shade
 The holy mountain made.

- 13 Non però dal lor esser dritto sparte
Tanto, che gli augelletti per le cime
Lasciasser d' operare ogni lor arte ;
- 16 Ma con piena letizia l' ôre prime,
Cantando, ricevièno intra le foglie,
Che tenevan bordone alle sue rime,
- 19 Tal qual di ramo in ramo si raccoglie
Per la pineta in sul lito di Chiassi,
Quand' Eolo Scirocco fuor discioglie.
- 22 Già m' avean trasportato i lenti passi
Dentro alla selva antica tanto, ch' io
Non potea rivedere ond' io m' entrassi :
- 25 Ed ecco il più andar mi tolse un rio,
Che inver sinistra con sue picciole onde
Piegava l' erba che in sua riva uscìo.
- 28 Tutte l' acque che son di qua più monde,
Parrieno avere in sè mistura alcuna,
Verso di quella che nulla nasconde :
- 31 Avvegna che si muova bruna bruna
Sotto l' ombra perpetua, che mai
Raggiar non lascia sole ivi, nè luna.

Yet ne'er so far away they fell,
But on their tops the birds could well
 Their wonted art pursue,
 And keep their office due.
Yea, but with full delight their song
Welcomed the morning gale among
 The leaves, whose rustling chime
 Kept burden to their rime:
Such burden gathers, bough on bough,
When winds through Chiassi's pinewood blow,
 What time Sirocco first
 From Eolus hath burst.
So far my easy steps had sped me,
And through that ancient wood had led me,
 My sight no more could win
 To where I entered in.
And lo! my course by stream was cleft,
Whose wavelets, bending to the left,
 Upon the herbage pressed,
 Wherewith the bank was dressed.
Was water none on earth so clear,
But 'twould with mixture stained appear,
 If set that stream beside
 Wherein can nought be hid.
Albeit embrowned 'twas moving there,
'Neath the perpetual shade, that ne'er
 Allows by night, by day,
 The sun, the moonbeam's ray.

- 34 Coi piè ristetti e con gli occhi passai
Di là dal fumaticello, per mirare
La gran variazion dei freschi mai :
- 37 E là m' apparve, sì com' egli appare
Subitamente cosa che disvia
Per maraviglia tutt' altro pensare,
- 40 Una Donna soletta, che si gia
Cantando, ed iscegliendo fior da fiore,
Ond' era pinta tutta la sua via.
- 43 Deh, bella Donna, ch' ai raggi d' amore
Ti scaldi, s' io vo' credere ai sembianti,
Che soglion esser testimon del cuore,
- 46 Vegnati in voglia di trarreti avanti,
Diss' io a lei, verso questa riviera,
Tanto ch' io possa intender che tu canti.
- 49 Tu mi fai rimembrar, dove e qual era
Proserpina nel tempo che perdette
La madre lei, ed ella primavera.
- 52 Come si volge, con le piante strette
A terra ed intra sè, donna che balli,
E piede innanzi piede a pena mette,

My feet I stayed: my eyes I sent
To pass across the stream, intent
 The rich variety
 Of fresh May-blooms to see.
And there to me appeared, as will
Suddenly things appear, that fill
 With wonder all our thought,
 And put all else without,
A dame, that singing went alone,
And flowers was gathering one by one,
 That round about her lay,
 And painted all her way.
"O lady fair," I said, "that art
"Warmed with love's rays, if so the heart
 "Aright I learn to trace
 "From witness of the face,
"Oh! be thou moved to pass before,
"And turn thee towards this river's shore,
 "That so my hearing reach
 "To what thy song would teach.
"Back to that day thou bidst me look,
"The day, from Proserpine that took
 "The flowers her lap that filled,
 "From mother took her child."
As in the ball one turns her round,
Her steps close planted on the ground,
 And scarcely doth she set
 Each before each her feet,

- 55 Volsesi in sui vermigli ed in sui gialli
 Fioretti verso me, non altrimenti
 Che vergine, che gli occhi onesti avvalli:
- 58 E fece i prieghi miei esser contenti,
 Sì appressando sè, che il dolce suono
 Veniva a me co' suoi intendimenti.
- 61 Tosto che fu là dove l' erbe sono
 Bagnate già dall' onde del bel fiume,
 Di levar gli occhi suoi mi fece dono.
- 64 Non credo che splendesse tanto lume
 Sotto le ciglia a Venere trafitta
 Dal figlio, fuor di tutto suo costume.
- 67 Ella ridea dall' altra riva dritta,
 Traendo più color con le sue mani,
 Che l' alta terra senza seme gitta.
- 70 Tre passi ci faceva il fiume lontani;
 Ma Ellesponto, dove passò Xerse,
 Ancora freno a tutti orgogli umani,
- 73 Più odio da Leandro non sofferse,
 Per mareggiare intra Sesto ed Abido,
 Che quel da me, perchè allor non s' aperse.

So on the flowers turned she, that there
Of scarlet and of yellow were,
 Bent down the while her eyes
 In seemly maiden-wise.
Then had my prayers content, as she
Drew herself nearer unto me,
 Until with her sweet strain
 Came all its meaning plain.
Soon as she was upon the swathe,
Which that fair river's waters bathe,
 Then of her gracious gift
 Did she her eyes uplift.
Never, I deem, 'neath Venus' brow
Did such resplendent radiance glow,
 E'en when the dart she felt,
 Her son unwitting dealt.
From the right bank, beyond the river,
She smiled, and flowers was gathering ever,
 From that high land up-thrown,
 Where seed was never sown.
In paces three the stream were crossed :
Yet Hellespont, where Xerxes' host
 Passed o'er, whose lesson still
 Curbs man's presumptuous will,
Roused in Leander hate less keen,
Abydos, Sestos rolled between,
 Than in me this begot,
 Because it opened not.

- 76 Voi siete nuovi, e forse perch' io rido,
Cominciò ella, in questo luogo eletto
All' umana natura per suo nido,
- 79 Maravigliando tienvi alcun sospetto ;
Ma luce rende il salmo *Delectasti*,
Che puote disnebbiar vostro intelletto.
- 82 E tu, che sei dinanzi, e mi pregasti,
Di' s' altro vuoi udir, ch' io venni presta
Ad ogni tua question, tanto che basti.
- 85 L' acqua, diss' io, e il suon della foresta,
Impugna dentro a me novella fede
Di cosa, ch' io udi' contraria a questa.
- 88 Ond' ella : Io dicero' come procede
Per sua cagion ciò ch' ammirar ti face,
E purgherò la nebbia che ti fiede.
- 91 Lo sommo Ben, che solo esso a sè piace,
Fece l' uom buono, e a bene, e questo loco
Diede per arra a lui d' eterna pace.
- 94 Per sua diffalta qui dimorò poco ;
Per sua diffalta in pianto ed in affanno
Cambiò onesto riso e dolce gioco.

And then : "New comers here are ye,
"And, haply, that my smile ye see,
 "Within this place, designed
 "For cradle of mankind,
"Some wonder from your doubt hath wrought :
"Yet by this psalm shall light be brought :
 "*'Thou hast rejoiced me'* shall
 "Discloud your reason all.
"And thou, that foremost art, Oh ! tell,
"If more thy prayer would ask : for well
 "May I thy questions speed,
 "Far as befits thy need."
"This water and this forest's sound
"Within me doth," I said, "confound
 "The faith but newly won,
 "From counter-rede begun."
"And I will tell," she said, "from whence
"This wonder hath perplexed thy sense :
 "So shall I purge away
 "The cloud that dims thy ray.
"The High Good, his own sole delight,
"Created man, for goodness fit,
 "And gave to him this place,
 "Earnest of lasting peace.
"Here for default short time he spent :
"Here for default were to lament
 "Changed and to weary sadness
 "Blithe smile and cheerful gladness.

- 97 Perchè il turbar, che sotto da sè fanno
L' esalazion dell' acqua e della terra,
Che, quanto posson, retro al calor vanno,
- 100 All' uomo non facesse alcuna guerra,
Questo monte sallo verso 'l ciel tanto;
E libero n' è d' indi ove si serra.
- 103 Or, perchè in circuito tutto e quanto
L' aer si volge con la prima volta,
Se non gli è rotto il cerchio d' alcun canto,
- 106 In questa altezza, che tutta è disciolta
Nell' aer vivo, tal moto percuote,
E fa sonar la selva perch' è folta;
- 109 E la percossa pianta tanto puote,
Che della sua virtute l' aura impregna,
E quella poi girando intorno scote:
- 112 E l' altra terra, secondo ch' è degna
Per sè e per suo ciel, concepe e figlia
Di diverse virtù diverse legna.
- 115 Non parrebbe di là poi maraviglia,
Udito questo, quando alcuna pianta
Senza seme palese vi s' appiglia.

“Lest aught of tumult, as below,
“From water’s exhalations grow,
 “Or earth’s, that to the fire,
 “Far as they may, retire,
“Uprose to heaven this hill so sheer,
“Protecting man from every fear:
 “Freed are ye from such war,
 “When ye have passed the bar.
“And since around the air is driven
“With turning of the primal heaven,
 “Except its circuit free
 “By barrier broken be,
“Upon this height, apart all set
“Within the living air, ’twill beat,
 “And through this forest’s bound
 “Make the close boughs resound.
“The trees, which by that blow are stricken,
“Have power the circling breeze to quicken;
 “Whence all along its road
 “Virtue is shed abroad:
“And thus the other earth below,
“Far as its soil, its skies allow,
 “Conceives and brings to birth
 “New plants of diverse worth.
“And yonder, once this tale be told,
“There need none marvel, who behold
 “When plant is rooted there,
 “Whereof no seed appear.

- 118 E saper dei che la campagna santa,
Ove tu sei, d' ogni semenza è piena,
E frutto ha in sè, che di là non si schianta.
- 121 L' acqua che vedi non surge di vena
Che ristori vapor che giel converta,
Come fiume ch' acquista e perde lena ;
- 124 Ma esce di fontana salda e certa,
Che tanto dal voler di Dio riprende,
Quant' ella versa da due parti aperta.
- 127 Da questa parte con virtù discende,
Che toglie altrui memoria del peccato ;
Dall' altra, d' ogni ben fatto la rende.
- 130 Quinci Letè, così dall' altro lato
Eunoè si chiama, e non adopra,
Se quinci e quindi pria non è gustato.
- 133 A tutt' altri sapori esto è di sopra.
Ed avvegna ch' assai possa esser sazia
La sete tua, perch' io più non ti scopra,
- 136 Darotti un corollario ancor per grazia,
Nè credo che il mio dir ti sia men caro,
Se oltre promission teco si spazia.

“ Know then, that on this holy ground,
“ Whereon thou art, all seed is found,
 “ Yea, and such fruit will grow,
 “ As ne’er is plucked below.
“ This water, too, no vein hath filled,
“ That must be fed from vapour chilled,
 “ And swells or faints, as river,
 “ With pulse that panteth ever :
“ Nay, but from fountain doth it pour,
“ That stints not nor will fail, whose store,
 “ Discharged through channels twain,
 “ God’s will renews again.
“ This channel runs, man’s mind within
“ To cleanse from memory of sin :
 “ While shall the other all
 “ His past good deeds recall.
“ Lethe this stream is called, and so
“ Yonder ’tis Eunoe : and know
 “ Who must their work fulfil,
 “ First tastes of either rill :
“ ’Tis sweet all savours else beyond.
“ And now, albeit thy thirst have found
 “ Content, and need no more
 “ Unfolding of my lore,
“ Take this corollary from me
“ Of grace, that no less dear shall be
 “ Though beyond promise reach
 “ The bounty of my speech.

139 Quelli che anticamente poetaro

L' età dell' oro e suo stato felice,

Forse in Parnaso esto loco sognaro.

142 Qui fu innocente l' umana radice ;

Qui primavera è sempre, ed ogni frutto ;

Nettare è questo di che ciascun dice.

145 Io mi volsi dietro allora tutto

A' miei Poeti, e vidi che con riso

Udito avevan l' ultimo costruito :

148 Poi alla bella Donna tornai il viso.

“The poets who discoursed of old
“The happy state, its age of gold,
“In their Parnassus seem
“Even of this place to dream.
“Here sinless grew our human root;
“Here spring time stays, and every fruit :
“The very nectar this
“Of which they fabled is.”
Back to my poets I turned and caught
The smile that last conclusion wrought :
Then on that lady fair
My eyes directed were.

CANTO VENTESIMONONO.

CANTANDO come donna innamorata,

Continuò col fin di sue parole :

Beati, quorum tecta sunt peccata.

4 E come ninfe che si givan sole

Per le salvatiche ombre, disiando

Qual di veder, qual di fuggir lo sole,

7 Allor si mosse contra il fiume, andando

Su per la riva, ed io pari di lei,

Picciol passo con picciol seguitando.

10 Non eran cento tra i suo' passi e i miei,

Quando le ripe igualmente dier volta,

Per modo ch' a levante mi rendei.

13 Nè ancor fu così nostra via molta,

Quando la Donna tutta a me si torse,

Dicendo : Frate mio, guarda, ed ascolta.

CANTO XXIX.

WITH chant, as from enamoured dame,
Her words unto their ending came :

And "*Blest are they*," she said,

"*Whose sins are coveréd.*"

As nymphs through woodland shadows stray,
Each on her solitary way,

One keen the sun to see,

And one therefrom to flee,

So moved she there, the margin by,
Against the stream ; and with her I,

Following in measured line

Her little steps with mine.

Our paces, hers and mine, scarce told
A hundred, when with even fold

Aside those banks were bent,

And I to eastward went.

When yet but little had we sped,

She turned and "Brother mine," she said

"Attend with eye and ear

"And watch what shall appear."

- 16 Ed ecco un lustro subito trascorse
Da tutte parti per la gran foresta,
Tal che di balenar mi mise in forse.
- 19 Ma perchè il balenar, come vien, resta,
E quel durando più e più splendeva,
Nel mio pensar dicea: Che cosa è questa?
- 22 Ed una melodia dolce correva
Per l' aer luminoso; onde buon zelo
Mi fe' riprender l' ardimento d' Eva,
- 25 Che, là dove ubbidia la terra e il cielo,
Femmina sola, e pur testè formata,
Non sofferse di star sotto alcun velo;
- 28 Sotto il qual, se devota fosse stata,
Avrei quelle ineffabili delizie
Sentite prima, e più lunga fiata.
- 31 Mentr' io m' andava tra tante primizie
Dell' eterno piacer, tutto sospeso,
E disioso ancora a più letizie,
- 34 Dinanzi a noi, tal quale un fuoco acceso,
Ci si fe' l' aer, sotto i verdi rami,
E il dolce suon per canto era già inteso:

And lo! through that great forest's bound
A sudden lustre ran around,
 Such that therein my mind
 The lightning seemed to find.
Yet, for the lightning, as it came,
So ends, and this with growing flame
 Stayed on, within my thought
 'What thing is this?' I sought.
And through the illumined air there ran
Sweet melody: and I began,
 Pricked on by zealous love
 Eve's rashness to reprove:
Who there, where earth and heaven obeyed,
Alone, a woman, newly made,
 Endured not to abide,
 'Neath any curtain hid:
'Neath which had she devoutly dwelt,
Those joys unuttered I had felt,
 Yea, long before this day,
 Through all my earthly stay.
While all enrapt I moved along,
Eternal love's first-fruits among,
 (And my desire was fain
 Yet more delights to gain)
Before our face the air became,
'Neath the green boughs, a kindled flame,
 And that sweet music's tone
 As chanting now was known.

- 37 O sacrosante Vergini, se fami,
 Freddi, o vigilie mai per voi soffersi,
 Cagion mi sprona, ch' io mercè ne chiami.
- 40 Or convien ch' Elicona per me versi,
 Ed Uranía m' aiuti col suo coro,
 Forti cose a pensar mettere in versi.
- 43 Poco più oltre sette arbori d' oro
 Falsava nel parere il lungo tratto
 Del mezzo, ch' era ancor tra noi e loro ;
- 46 Ma quando fui sì presso di lor fatto,
 Che l' obbietto comun, che il senso inganna,
 Non perdea per distanza alcun suo atto ;
- 49 La virtù, ch' a ragion discorso ammanna,
 Siccom' elli eran candelabri apprese,
 E nelle voci del cantare Osanna.
- 52 Di sopra fiammeggiava il bello arnese
 Più chiaro assai, che luna per sereno
 Di mezza notte nel suo mezzo mese.
- 55 Io mi rivolsi d' ammirazion pieno
 Al buon Virgilio, ed esso mi rispose
 Con vista carica di stupor non meno.

O holy Virgins, if for you
Cold, fasts, and watching e'er I knew,
 In this my present need
 Must I for guerdon plead.
Helicon here its stream must send,
Urania's choir their aid must lend,
 And to my verse must teach
 Things hard in thought to reach.
A little way beyond there gleamed
Seven trees of gold, or so they seemed
 Through the deceiving space,
 That stretched before our face:
But nearer when I was, and thence
The common shape that cheats our sense
 Each several note revealed,
 That distance had concealed,
The power, which reason's theme supplies,
Understood them in very wise
 For candlesticks, and through
 That chant "Hosanna" knew.
Flamed o'er us that fair panoply,
Clearer than when in cloudless sky
 Shineth the moon most bright
 In mid month at mid night.
I turned aside with wonder filled
To my good Virgil, and beheld
 His face with awe impressed,
 That no less load confessed.

- 58 Indi rendei l' aspetto all' alte cose,
Che si moveano incontro a noi sì tardi,
Che foran vinte da novelle spose.
- 61 La Donna mi sgridò: Perchè pur ardi
Sì nell' aspetto delle vive luci,
E ciò che vien dietro a lor non guardi?
- 64 Genti vid' io allor, com' a lor duci,
Venire appresso, vestite di bianco;
E tal candor di qua giammai non fuci.
- 67 L' acqua splendeva dal sinistro fianco,
E rendea a me la mia sinistra costa,
S' io riguardava in lei come specchio anco.
- 70 Quand' io dalla mia riva ebbi tal posta,
Che solo il fiume mi facea distante,
Per veder meglio ai passi diedi sosta,
- 73 E vidi le fiammelle andar davante,
Lasciando retro a sè l' aer dipinto,
E di tratti pennelli avean sembante;
- 76 Sì che lì sopra rimanea distinto
Di sette liste, tutte in quei colori,
Onde fa l' arco il sole, e Delia il cinto.

Then on those high things gazed I wholly,
Which towards us moving were so slowly,
That 'gainst their tardy pace
New brides had won the race.
That lady cried: "Why burns alone
"Thy love these living lights upon?
"Why wilt not give thy mind
"To that which comes behind?"
Then close, as in guides' track, I saw,
In robes of white, a people draw,
White of such dazzling sheen,
As here was never seen.
Blazed on the left the water clear,
And my left side reflected there,
So as in mirror's face
Its likeness I could trace.
When close upon my bank I stood,
Divided only by the flood,
My steps I stayed, that so
That sight I best might know;
And saw the flamelets forward wind,
Painting the air they left behind:
Seemed each as 'twere a line
Drawn out by pencil fine.
And thence the air above remained
Distinct in seven bands, and stained
Such hues as Phoebus' arc
And Delia's girdle mark.

- 79 Questi ostendali dietro eran maggiori,
Che la mia vista; e, quanto al mio avviso,
Dieci passi distavan quei di fuori.
- 82 Sotto così bel ciel, com' io diviso,
Ventiquattro seniori, a due a due,
Coronati venian di fiordaliso.
- 85 Tutti cantavan: Benedetta tue
Nelle figlie d' Adamo, e benedette
Sieno in eterno le bellezze tue.
- 88 Poscia che i fiori e l' altre fresche erbette,
A rimpetto di me dall' altra sponda,
Libere fur da quelle genti elette,
- 91 Sì come luce luce in ciel seconda,
Vennero appresso lor quattro animali,
Coronato ciascun di verde fronda.
- 94 Ognuno era pennuto di sei ali;
Le penne piene d' occhi; e gli occhi d' Argo,
Se fosser vivi, sarebber cotali.
- 97 A descriver lor forme più non spargo
Rime, lettor; ch' altra spesa mi strigne
Tanto, che a questa non posso esser largo.

Rearward far out those banners streamed
Beyond my sight: and, as I deemed,
 Ten steps the space had been
 The outermost between.
'Neath sky so fair, of my device,
Elders crowned each with fleur-de-lys
 Came forth, by two and two,
 Twice twelve in order due.
They chanted all: "Oh! blest is thee
"Mongst Adam's daughters; yea and be
 "For everlasting blest
 "Thy graces loveliest!"
And soon as by that band elect
The path, with flowers, with herbage, decked,
 Upon the further shore,
 Was trodden now no more,
Behind them following close there came,
As flame in heaven succeeds to flame,
 Four living beasts, each one
 With green leaves crowned upon.
Each with six wings was plumed without:
With eyes was filled each plume about:
 Such as on Argus grew,
 Whilst living breath he drew.
My rimes no further may I spare,
Reader, their nature to declare:
 For other debt remains,
 My bounty that restrains.

- 100 Ma leggi Ezechiël, che li dipigne
Come li vide dalla fredda parte
Venir con vento, con nube e con igne;
- 103 E quali i troverai nelle sue carte,
Tali eran quivi, salvo ch' alle penne
Giovanni è meco, e da lui si diparte.
- 106 Lo spazio dentro a lor quattro contenne
Un carro, in su due rote, trionfale,
Ch' al collo d' un grifon tirato venne.
- 109 Esso tendea in su l' una e l' altr' ale
Tra la mezzana e le tre e tre liste,
Sì ch' a nulla fendendo facea male.
- 112 Tanto salivan, che non eran viste;
Le membra d' oro avea, quanto era uccello,
E bianche l' altre di vermiglio miste.
- 115 Non che Roma di carro così bello
Rallegrasse Affricano, o vero Augusto;
Ma quel del Sol saria pover con ello;
- 118 Quel del Sol, che sviando fu combusto,
Per l' orazion della Terra devota,
Quando fu Giove arcanamente giusto.

But read Ezekiel, where he shows
The vision that before him rose,
 From the cold north that came,
 With wind and cloud and flame :
For in his page is written well,
Save for their wings, the sight I tell :
 Here John is with me ever,
 And from his tale doth sever.
The space within those four revealed
A car triumphal, double-wheeled :
 Drawn on by chain it passed
 Round neck of Griphon cast.
Among those bands his wings stretched he,
'Twixt midmost and the three and three :
 So that he cleft not aught,
 Nor harm to any wrought.
Upward, beyond my sight, they rolled :
For his bird's part, his limbs were gold :
 And all the rest was white,
 With streaks of vermeil dight.
Ne'er car so fair did Rome provide,
For Scipio's or Augustus' pride :
 Nay, Sol's own chariot there
 But sorry grace would wear ;
Chariot, which gone astray was all
Consumed, at pious Terra's call,
 When from Jove's secret thought
 The righteous doom was wrought.

- 121 Tre donne in giro, dalla destra rota,
Venian danzando; l' una tanto rossa,
Ch' a pena fora dentro al fuoco nota;
- 124 L' altr' era, come se le carni e l' ossa
Fossero state di smeraldo fatte;
La terza pareva neve testè mossa:
- 127 Ed or parevan dalla bianca tratte,
Or dalla rossa, e dal canto di questa
L' altre togliean l' andare e tarde e ratte.
- 130 Dalla sinistra quattro facean festa,
In porpora vestite, dietro al modo
D' una di lor, ch' avea tre occhi in testa.
- 133 Appresso tutto il pertrattato nodo,
Vidi due vecchi in abito dispari,
Ma pari in atto, ed onestato e sodo.
- 136 L' un si mostrava alcun de' famigliari
Di quel sommo Ippocrate, che natura
Agli animali fe' ch' ell' ha più cari.
- 139 Mostrava l' altro la contraria cura
Con una spada lucida ed acuta,
Tal che di qua dal rio mi fe' paura.

Now, at the dexter wheel, around
Danced ladies three, in circle wound ;
 And one so red, that she
 In fire would hidden be ;
The next was such as she had been,
If flesh and bones were emerald sheen ;
 The third was white as though
 Of newly driven snow.
It seemed as they were forward led,
Now by the white, now by the red ;
 Advancing slow or fast
 At chanting of the last.
On the left four made holiday :
In robes of purple clad were they :
 And she that danced before
 Three eyes on forehead bore.
Behind such group as I rehearse,
Came ancients twain, in garb diverse,
 But like in mien and gait,
 Ennobled and sedate.
One seemed a scholar's place to fill
Of great Hippocrates, whose skill
 Nature for hers designed,
 Most dear of living kind.
The other took the counter part,
With shining blade that deals the smart :
 Therefrom in fear I shrank,
 Though on the hither bank.

- 142 Poi vidi quattro in umile paruta,
E dietro da tutti un veglio solo
Venir, dormendo, con la faccia arguta.
- 145 E questi sette col primaio stuolo
Erano abituati; ma di gigli
Dintorno al capo non facevan brolo,
- 148 Anzi di rose e d' altri fior vermigli:
Giurato avria poco lontano aspetto,
Che tutti ardesser di sopra dai cigli.
- 151 E quando il carro a me fu a rimpetto,
Un tuon s' udl; e quelle genti degne
Parvero aver l' andar più interdetto,
- 154 Fermandos' ivi con le prime insegne.

Then four I saw, in humble gown,
And last an ancient one, alone ;
 Asleep, yet while he slept,
 His face its vigil kept.
Habited were these seven last
Like to the band that foremost passed,
 Save that around their head
 No liliated wreath was spread :
Nay, but with roses crowned were they
And crimson flowers: as who should say,
 Except he drew him nigher,
 Their temples were on fire.
When right abreast me came the car,
Pealed thunder: and, as met by bar,
 That noble host delayed,
 And with its standards stayed.

CANTO TRENTESIMO.

- QUANDO il settentrion del primo cielo,
Che nè occaso mai seppe nè orto,
Nè d' altra nebbia, che di colpa velo,
4 E che faceva lì ciascuno accorto
Di suo dover, come il più basso face,
Qual timon gira per venire a porto,
7 Fermo si affisse, la gente verace,
Venuta prima tra il grifone ed esso,
Al carro volse sè, come a sua pace :
10 Ed un di loro, quasi da ciel messo,
Veni, sponsa, de Libano, cantando,
Gridò tre volte, e tutti gli altri appresso.
13 Quali i beati al novissimo bando
Surgeran presti ognun di sua caverna,
La rivestita voce alleluando,

CANTO XXX.

SOON as the primal heaven's wain,
Which riseth not, nor sets again,
Nay nor is veiled within
Cloud, save that comes of sin ;
The wain that there to each did show
His duty, even as that below
Ruleth the steersman's hand,
And guides his bark to land :
Soon as it stayed, that people true,
Which 'twixt it and the Griphon drew,
Turned to the car behind,
As there its peace to find.
Of these, as sent from Heaven, one cried
"Come thou from Lebanon, come, my bride!" :
Three times he sang, and all
The others joined the call.
As at the latest summons risen
The saints shall issue from their prison,
And Hallelujahs pour
With voice enfleshed once more ;

- 16 Cotali, in sulla divina basterna,
Si levar cento, *ad vocem tanti senis*,
Ministri e messaggier di vita eterna.
- 19 Tutti dicean: *Benedictus, qui venis*,
E, fior gittando di sopra e dintorno,
Manibus o date lilia plenis.
- 22 Io vidi già nel cominciar del giorno
La parte oriental tutta rosata,
E l' altro ciel di bel sereno adorno ;
- 25 E la faccia del sol nascere ombrata,
Sì che per temperanza di vapori,
L' occhio la sostenea lunga fiata ;
- 28 Così dentro una nuvola di fiori,
Che dalle mani angeliche saliva,
E ricadea in giù dentro e di fuori,
- 31 Sopra candido vel cinta d' oliva
Donna m' apparve, sotto verde manto,
Vestita di color di fiamma viva.
- 34 E lo spirito mio, che già cotanto
Tempo era stato che alla sua presenza
Non era di stupor, tremando, affranto,

Even so, upon that elder's cry,
A hundred rose, the chariot by,
Ministers, message-fraught,
Eternal life that taught.
" *Blessed art thou that comest!*" they said,
Whilst all about them flowers they shed :
And " *Bring ye lilies, bring,*
" *From full hands lavishing.*"
Erst have I seen at dawn of day
The east in roseate array,
Whilst all the sky elsewhere
Was left serene and fair ;
Then rose the sun through shadow seen,
And, tempered by the mists between,
Long while my eyes could brook
Upon his face to look :
So there within a cloud of flowers,
Which from the angels' hands in showers
Were tossed and flung about,
Within and eke without,
With olive bound, o'er veil of white,
A lady issued to my sight :
'Neath mantle green she came,
In robe tinged living flame :
My spirit, that the long while past
Had from her presence been outcast,
Wherein 'twas ever stayed
Trembling and sore dismayed,

- 37 Senza degli occhi aver più conoscenza,
Per occulta virtù che da lei mosse,
D' antico amor sentì la gran potenza.
- 40 Tosto che nella vista mi percosse
L' alta virtù, che già m' avea trafitto
Prima ch' io fuor di puerizia fosse,
- 43 Volsimi alla sinistra col rispetto,
Col quale il fantolin corre alla mamma,
Quando ha paura o quando egli è afflitto,
- 46 Per dicere a Virgilio: Men che dramma
Di sangue m' è rimaso, che non tremi;
Conosco i segni dell' antica fiamma.
- 49 Ma Virgilio n' avea lasciati scemi
Di sè, Virgilio dolcissimo padre,
Virgilio a cui per mia salute die' mi:
- 52 Nè quantunque perdè l' antica madre,
Valse alle guance nette di rugiada,
Che lagrimando non tornassero adre.
- 55 Dante, perchè Virgilio se ne vada,
Non pianger anco, non pianger ancora;
Chè pianger ti convien per altra spada.

Asked of her eyes no more to know :
Such secret power from her did flow,
 It wrought on me to prove
 The might of ancient love.
And soon as on my sight there broke
That excellence supreme, whose stroke
 Already I had known,
 Ere boyhood was outgrown,
To the left turned I in such wise,
As child unto his mother flies,
 Running to her, whene'er
 In trouble or in fear,
And spake to Virgil: "In my veins
"No drachm that trembleth not remains:
 "By token well I know
 "The flame of long ago."
But we had been by Virgil left,
Of Virgil, father sweet, bereft,
 Virgil, to whom I gave me,
 And turned to him to save me.
Not all the vision of that place
Our ancient mother lost, had grace
 My dew-cleansed cheeks to guard
 From tears their hue that marred.
"Dante, weep not; though Virgil be
"Departed, weep not yet: for thee
 "Behoves thy tears be poured
 "At stroke of other sword."

- 58 Quasi ammiraglio, che in poppa ed in prora
Viene a veder la gente che ministra
Per gli altri legni, ed a ben far la incuora ;
- 61 In sulla sponda del carro sinistra,
Quando mi volsi al suon del nome mio,
Che di necessità qui si registra,
- 64 Vidi la Donna, che pria m' apparìo
Velata sotto l' angelica festa,
Drizzar gli occhi ver me di qua dal rio.
- 67 Tutto che il vel che le scendea di testa,
Cerchiato dalla fronde di Minerva,
Non la lasciasse parer manifesta ;
- 70 Regalmente nell' atto ancor proterva
Continuò, come colui che dice,
E il più caldo parlar dietro serva :
- 73 Guardaci ben : ben son, ben son Beatrice !
Come degnasti d' accedere al monte ?
Non sapei tu, che qui è l' uom felice ?
- 76 Gli occhi mi cadder giù nel chiaro fonte ;
Ma veggendomi in esso, i trassi all' erba,
Tanta vergogna mi gravò la fronte.

As admiral his fleet reviews,
From poop, from prow, and bids his crews,
 On all the ships about,
 Stir them to courage stout ;
So, on that car's left edge appeared,
Even as I turned me, when I heard
 My name pronounced, that here
 Perforce I register,
That lady, who before had been,
Enveiled, 'mid the angels' greeting seen,
 On me her eyes now bending,
 Across the river sending.
And though the veil her head beneath,
Encircled with Minerva's wreath,
 Hung down, nor left confessed
 Her semblance manifest ;
In royal wise, but haughty still,
Continued she, as one that will
 Speak, yet within him stored
 Keeps back his sharper word.
"Look well! 'tis Beatris, 'tis I :
"How didst thou dare that hill to try?
 "Didst thou not know that this
 "Is man's appointed bliss?"
My eyes within the fountain clear
Sank down, and met my semblance there :
 Then on the grass were laid,
 Such shame my brow o'erweighed.

- 79 Così la madre al figlio par superba,
Com' ella parve a me; per che d' amaro
Sente 'l sapor della pietate acerba.
- 82 Ella si tacque, e gli Angeli cantaro
Di subito: *In te, Domine, speravi;*
Ma oltre *pedes meos* non passaro.
- 85 Sì come neve, tra le vive travi,
Per lo dosso d' Italia si congela,
Soffiata e stretta dagli venti Schiavi,
- 88 Poi liquefatta in sè stessa trapela,
Pur che la terra, che perde ombra, spiri,
Sì che par fuoco fonder la candela:
- 91 Così fui senza lagrime e sospiri
Anzi il cantar di quei che notan sempre
Dietro alle note degli eterni giri.
- 94 Ma poichè intesi nelle dolci tempre
Lor compatire a me, più che se detto
Avesser: Donna, perchè sì lo stembre?
- 97 Lo giel che m' era intorno al cuor ristretto,
Spirito ed acqua fessi, e con angoscia
Per la bocca e per gli occhi uscì del petto.

As mother seems to child unkind,
Even so appeared she to my mind:
 For bitter aye must prove
 The taste of chastening love.
She held her peace: and suddenly
The angels sang "*O Lord, in thee*
 "*Hath been my hope*", then stayed
 When they "*my feet*" had said.
And as adown Italia's back
'Mongst the live beams the snow will pack,
 By the Sclavonian blast
 Drifted and frozen fast:
Anon it peels and liquefies,
When breathes the land where shadow dies,
 As candle melts away
 In the flame's glowing ray:
Even so before their song, whose chime
With the eternal spheres keeps time,
 Had I close pent remained,
 From tears, from sighs restrained.
But when in their melodious strain
Pity for me I knew, more plain
 Than if their pleading were
 "*Lady, why so severe?*",
The ice, wherewith my heart was crushed,
Water and breath became, and gushed
 In anguish from my breast,
 Through mouth and eyes expressed.

- 100 Ella, pur ferma in sulla detta coscia
Del carro stando, alle sustanzie pie
Volse le sue parole così poscia :
- 103 Voi vigilate nell' eterno dìe,
Sì che notte nè sonno a voi non fura
Passo, che faccia il secol per sue vie ;
- 106 Onde la mia risposta è con più cura,
Che m' intenda colui che di là piagne,
Perchè sia colpa e duol d' una misura.
- 109 Non pur per opra delle ruote magne,
Che drizzan ciascun seme ad alcun fine,
Secondo che le stelle son compagne ;
- 112 Ma per larghezza di grazie divine,
Che sì alti vapori hanno a lor piova,
Che nostre viste là non van vicine,
- 115 Questi fu tal nella sua vita nuova
Virtualmente, ch' ogni abito destro
Fatto averebbe in lui mirabil prova.
- 118 Ma tanto più maligno e più silvestro
Si fa il terren col mal seme e non colto,
Quant' egli ha più del buon vigor terrestre.

And she unmoved still kept her stand
Upon the chariot's self-same hand :
 And now she turned her speech
 Those beings kind to reach.
"Ye, watching through th' eternal day,
"Nor night nor sleep let filch away
 "From you one foot-pace trod
 "By Time upon his road.
"Hence, if my word more care receives,
"Tis for his sake, beyond that grieves,
 "That guilt and pain may be
 "Proportioned equally.
"Wrought not alone those circles wide,
"That for each seed some end provide,
 "As on its way 'twill fare,
 "Companioned by its star :
"But by largess of grace divine,
"That from above in showers benign
 "Rains down from such a height
 "As far outvies our sight,
"To him, in his new life, from Heaven
"Such power for all high aims was given,
 "That well might he attain
 "Marvellous ends to gain.
"But aye 't hath been, that choicest ground,
"Wherein most native strength is found,
 "Untilled, with ill seed sown,
 "Most wild, most foul hath grown.

- 121 Alcu tempo il sostenni col mio volto ;
Mostrando gli occhi giovinetti a lui,
Meco il menava in dritta parte volto.
- 124 Sì tosto come in sulla soglia fui
Di mia seconda etade, e mutai vita,
Questi si tolse a me, e diessi altrui.
- 127 Quando di carne a spirto era salita,
E bellezza e virtù cresciuta m' era,
Fu' io a lui men cara e men gradita ;
- 130 E volse i passi suoi per via non vera,
Imagini di ben seguendo false,
Che nulla promission rendono intera.
- 133 Nè impetrare ispirazion mi valse,
Con le quali ed in sogno ed altrimenti
Lo rivocai ; sì poco a lui ne calse.
- 136 Tanto giù cadde, che tutti argomenti
Alla salute sua eran già corti,
Fuor che mostrargli le perdute genti.
- 139 Per questo visitai l' uscio dei morti,
Ed a colui che l' ha quassù condotto,
Li prieghi miei, piangendo, furon porti.

- “Some while my countenance upbore him ;
“My youthful eyes I showed before him ;
 “And with me led him on,
 “Set the straight road upon.
“But when, before the threshold ranged
“Of my next age, my life I changed,
 “Then he forsook my care,
 “And turned him elsewhere.
“From flesh to spirit when I drew,
“And to full grace and beauty grew,
 “Then unto him I proved
 “Less fair and less beloved.
“He turned, and path untrue he trod,
“Following false images of good,
 “False images that will
 “Their promise ne’er fulfil.
“In vain ’twas given his thoughts to raise
“In dreams, in divers other ways :
 “He turned not to their call,
 “Nor heeded them at all.
“So far he sank, that no device
“For his redemption would suffice,
 “Except one went to show
 “The people lost below.
“Wherefore the portal of the dead,
“With prayers, with tears, I visited ;
 “And for his aid I sought,
 “Who him hath upward brought.

142 Alto fato di Dio sarebbe rotto,

Se Lete si passasse, e tal vivanda

Fosse gustata senza alcuno scotto

145 Di pentimento che lagrime spanda.

“God’s doom would broken be, if passed
“Were Lethe’s stream, and that repast
 “Were quaffed without dispense
 “Of tearful penitence.”

CANTO TRENTESIMOPRIMO.

- O TU, che sei di là dal fiume sacro,
Volgendo suo parlare a me per punta,
Che pur per taglio m' era paruto acro,
4 Ricominciò, seguendo senza cunta,
Di', di', se questo è vero; a tanta accusa
Tua confession conviene esser congiunta.
7 Era la mia virtù tanto confusa,
Che la voce si mosse, e pria si spense,
Che dagli organi suoi fosse dischiusa.
10 Poco sofferse, poi disse: Che pense?
Rispondi a me; chè le memorie triste
In te non sono ancor dall' acqua offense.
13 Confusione e paura insieme miste
Mi pinsero un tal s' fuor della bocca,
Al quale intender fur mestier le viste.

CANTO XXXI.

"O THOU, beyond the sacred river,"

Thus she began, nor halted ever,

 "Say, say, if this be true :

 "To such a charge 'tis due

"That thy confession be conjoint."

And upon me she turned with point

 Her speech, that late had been

 With edge alone so keen.

Thereat so baffled was my power,

My voice was stirred, but failed before

 Thorough the gate of speech

 Its utterance could reach.

She stayed a while, and then she spake :

"What thinkest thou? Thy answer make :

 "The water hath not yet

 "Bade thee thy fault forget."

Fear mingled with bewilderment

Forced from my lips such faint assent,

 As needed aid from sight

 Ere it were read aright.

- 16 Come balestro frange, quando scocca
Da troppa tesa, la sua corda e l' arco,
E con men foga l' asta il segno tocca;
- 19 Sì scoppia' io sott' esso grave carico,
Fuori sgorgando lagrime e sospiri,
E la voce allentò per lo suo varco.
- 22 Ond' ella a me: Per entro i miei disiri,
Che ti menavano ad amar lo bene,
Di là dal qual non è a che si aspiri,
- 25 Quai fossi attraversati, o quai catene
Trovasti, per che del passare innanzi
Dovessiti cosl' spogliar la spene?
- 28 E quali agevolezze, o quali avanzi
Nella fronte degli altri si mostraro,
Per che dovessi lor passeggiare anzi?
- 31 Dopo la tratta d' un sospiro amaro,
A pena ebbi la voce che rispose,
E le labbra a fatica la formaro.
- 34 Piangendo dissi: Le presenti cose
Col falso lor piacer volser miei passi,
Tosto che il vostro viso si nascose.

As arblast, snapped with overstrain,
The bow and bowstring breaks amain;
The bolt, too feebly shot,
Its mark attaineth not:

So burst I 'neath that heavy load:
My tears, my sighs, in torrent flowed:
Therewith my voice delayed,
And in its passage stayed.

And she: "In my desires, that strove
"To lead thee where that good to love,
"That good so great, that higher
"May never man aspire,

"What dykes across thy path were set,
"Or by what chainings wast thou let,
"That must thy passage foil,
"And thee of hope despoil?

"What forwarding, what comfort light,
"Could others open to thy sight,
"That thou shouldst turn from me
"And in their presence be?"

When I had drawn one bitter sigh,
Scarce found I voice for my reply:
The words thenceforth that came,
My lips could hardly frame.

Weeping I said: "I went astray,
"Drawn by false pleasures of to-day,
"Soon as thy vision failed,
"And from my eyes was veiled."

- 37 Ed ella : Se tacessi, o se negassi
 Ciò che confessi, non fora men nota
 La colpa tua : da tal giudice sassi.
- 40 Ma quando scoppia dalla propria gota
 L' accusa del peccato, in nostra corte
 Rivolge sè contra il taglio la ruota.
- 43 Tuttavia, perchè mo vergogna porte
 Del tuo errore, e perchè altra volta
 Udendo le Sirene sie più forte,
- 46 Pon giù il seme del piangere, ed ascolta ;
 Sì udirai come in contraria parte
 Muover doveati mia carne sepolta.
- 49 Mai non t' appresentò natura o arte
 Piacer, quanto le belle membra in ch' io
 Rinchiusa fui, e sono in terra sparte :
- 52 E se il sommo piacer sì ti fallio
 Per la mia morte, qual cosa mortale
 Dovea poi trarre te nel suo disio ?
- 55 Ben ti dovevi, per lo primo strale
 Delle cose fallaci, levar suso
 Diretro a me che non era più tale.

“If thou hadst held thy peace, or tried,
“What now thou hast confessed, to hide,
 “Still would thy fault be clear:
 “Such judge” she said “is here.
“But, when the accusation first
“Forth from the culprit’s lips hath burst,
 “Then in our court the wheel
 “Turns back, and blunts the steel.
“Albeit, that thou thy fault mayest see
“With greater shame, and braver be,
 “When thou shalt list again
 “To the false Siren’s strain,
“The sowing of thy tears suspend,
“And to my buried flesh attend,
 “How counterwise ’twas meet
 “That it should move thy feet.
“Nature nor art have shown thee ne’er
“Such grace, as in the members fair,
 “That I was clothed withal,
 “On earth now scattered all:
“And, if my death had ta’en from thee
“That highest pleasure, could there be
 “Aught mortal, that should fire
 “Thy heart with its desire?
“Rather ’twas thine, when first the stroke
“Of those false joys upon thee broke,
 “To rise and pass before
 “To me, now such no more.

- 58 Non ti dovea gravar le penne in giuso,
Ad aspettar più colpi, o pargoletta,
O altra vanità con sì breve uso.
- 61 Nuovo augelletto due o tre aspetta;
Ma dinanzi dagli occhi dei pennuti
Rete si spiega indarno o si saetta.
- 64 Quali i fanciulli vergognando muti,
Con gli occhi a terra, stannosi ascoltando,
E sè riconoscendo, e ripentuti,
- 67 Tal mi stava io. Ed ella disse: Quando
Per udir sei dolente, alza la barba,
E prenderai più doglia riguardando.
- 70 Con men di resistenza si dibarba
Robusto cerro, o vero al nostral vento,
O vero a quel della terra di Iarba,
- 73 Ch' io non levai al suo comando il mento;
E quando per la barba il viso chiese,
Ben conobbi il velen dell' argomento.
- 76 E come la mia faccia si distese,
Posarsi quelle prime creature
Da loro aspersion l' occhio comprese:

“Thy part ’twas not to stoop thy wings,
“And court the breath of lightsome things,
 “The glance of girlish eye,
 “Or like brief vanity.

“The second onset and the third
“The nestling waits: for full-fledged bird
 “In vain the net is spread,
 “In vain the shaft is sped.”

As children shamed stand mute, their eyes
To earthward turned in humble wise,
 Searching their conscience,
 And grown to penitence:

So I: and “If what thou hast heard”
She said “doth grieve thee, lift thy beard:
 “Greater thy pain will be,
 “When thou shalt look on me.”

With less resistance stubborn oak
Uprooted is before the stroke
 Of winds from Europe’s land,
 Or from Iarba’s strand,

Than at her word my chin uprose:
And, when to mark my face she chose
 My beard, well could I reach
 The venom of her speech.

And as my gaze I upward turned,
Those first-born creatures I discerned,
 At rest, their labour o’er,
 And scattering flowers no more.

- 79 E le mie luci, ancor poco sicure,
Vider Beatrice volta in sulla fiera,
Ch' è sola una persona in due nature.
- 82 Sotto suo velo, ed oltre la riviera
Vincer pareami più sè stessa antica,
Vincer che l' altre qui, quand' ella c' era.
- 85 Di penter sì mi punse ivi l' ortica,
Che di tutt' altre cose, qual mi torse
Più nel suo amor, più mi si fe' nimica.
- 88 Tanta riconoscenza il cuor mi morse,
Ch' io caddi vinto, e quale allora femmi,
Salsi colei che la cagion mi porse.
- 91 Poi, quando il cuor di fuor virtù rendemmi,
La Donna, ch' io avea trovata sola,
Sopra me vidi, e dicea: Tiemmi, tiemmi.
- 94 Tratto m' avea nel fiume infino a gola,
E, tirandosi me dietro, sen giva
Sopr' esso l' acqua, lieve come spola.
- 97 Quando fui presso alla beata riva,
Asperges me sì dolcemente udissi,
Ch' io nol so rimembrar, non ch' io lo scriva.

With eyes scarce reassured I saw
Beatris towards that monster draw,
Which in two natures joined,
One person hath confined.
Beneath her veil, beyond the river,
Her ancient self surpassed she ever;
Surpassed, yea more than here
All those who with her were.
Thereat remorse with nettle sting
Wrought so, that every other thing,
Whose love had most misled,
Now keenest hatred bred.
My wakened sense so pricked my heart,
I fell, all vanquished by its smart,
As unto her alone,
From whom it came, is known.
My heart relaxed its grasp, and then
Above me her I saw again,
Alone who sought my side,
And "Hold me, hold" she cried.
Throat deep into the stream she threw me,
And onward in her track she drew me:
So o'er the wave she passed,
As shuttle sliding fast.
To the blest bank when I drew near,
Then "*Thou shalt purge me*" could I hear,
So sweet it ne'er may be
Recalled or writ by me.

- 100 La bella Donna nelle braccia aprissi,
Abbracciommi la testa, e mi sommerse,
Ove convenne ch' io l' acqua inghiottissi ;
- 103 Indi mi tolse, e bagnato mi offerse
Dentro alla danza delle quattro belle,
E ciascuna del braccio mi coperse.
- 106 Noi siam qui ninfe, e nel ciel siamo stelle ;
Pria che Beatrice discendesse al mondo,
Fummo ordinate a lei per sue ancelle.
- 109 Menrenti agli occhi suoi ; ma nel giocondo
Lume ch' è dentro aguzzeranno i tuoi
Le tre di là, che miran più profondo.
- 112 Così cantando cominciare ; e poi
Al petto del grifon seco menarmi,
Ove Beatrice stava volta a noi.
- 115 Disser : Fa che le viste non risparmi ;
Posto t' avem dinanzi agli smeraldi,
Ond' Amor già ti trasse le sue armi.
- 118 Mille disiri più che fiamma caldi
Strinsermi gli occhi agli occhi rilucenti,
Che pur sopra il grifone stavan saldi.

That lady fair her arms outspread ;
In her embrace she clasped my head :
 Then plunged me, that I sank,
 And of the water drank.
She drew me from that bath, and bore me
Where those four fair ones danced before me ;
 And with her arms without
 Each covered me about.
“Nymphs are we here, and stars in heaven :
“Ere Beatris from above was given
 “To earth, ordained were we,
 “Her handmaidens to be.
“And we will bring thee to her eyes :
“On the glad light to gaze that lies
 “ therein, yon three shall teach,
 “Who to its depths can reach.”
So singing they began : then sped me,
And to the Griphon’s breast they led me ;
 Where Beatris had place,
 And towards us turned her face.
And “Spare not thou” they said “thy sight :
“Thou art before the emerald light,
 “Whence Love aforetime drew
 “His shafts to pierce thee through.”
Desires a thousand, fiercer burning
Than flame, my eyes on hers were turning ;
 On hers, that steadfast yet
 Were on the Griphon set.

121 Come in lo specchio il sol, non altrimenti

La doppia fiera dentro vi raggiava,

Or con uni, or con altri reggimenti.

124 Pensa, lettor, s' io mi maravigliava,

Quando vedea la cosa in sè star queta,

E nell' idolo suo si trasmutava.

127 Mentre che, piena di stupore e lieta,

L' anima mia gustava di quel cibo,

Che, saziando di sè, di sè asseta ;

130 Sè dimostrando di più alto tribo

Negli atti, l' altre tre si fero avanti,

Danzando al loro angelico caribo.

133 Volgi, Beatrice, volgi gli occhi santi,

Era la lor canzone, al tuo fedele

Che, per vederti, ha mossi passi tanti.

136 Per grazia fa noi grazia che disvele

A lui la bocca tua, sì che discerna

La seconda bellezza che tu cele.

139 O isplendor di viva luce eterna,

Chi pallido si fece sotto l' ombra

Sì di Parnaso, o bevve in sua cisterna,

As sun in mirror, from her gaze
Shone forth that twofold creature's rays,

And towards us were directed,

In either guise reflected.

Think, Reader, what my marvelling
Must be, when I beheld the thing

Stay constant, moving never,

Though changed its image ever.

While awestruck, yet in joyful mood,

My soul was tasting of that food,

Which gives us of our fill,

But leaves us thirsting still,

Those other three, that in their port

Displayed themselves of nobler sort,

Came forward, dancing all

In reel angelical.

"Turn, turn thy holy eyes upon,

"Upon" they sang "thy faithful one,

"Who on so long a road

"To see thy face hath trod.

"Of grace do grace to us and show

"To him thy mouth, that he may know

"Thy second charms revealed,

"Till now by thee concealed."

O thou refulgent splendour bright

Of living and eternal light,

Who, though Parnassus' shade

His cheek had pallid made,

142 Che non paresse aver la mente ingombra,
Tentando a render te qual tu paresti
Là, dove armonizzando il ciel t' adombra,
145 Quando nell' aere aperto ti solvesti?

Yea, though he tasted of its stream,
Would not with mind beclouded seem,
 If he essayed to show
 The fulness of thy glow,
As in that place to me 'twas given,
Set to the harmony of heaven,
 When I beheld thee clear,
 Loosed in the open air?

CANTO TRENTESIMOSECONDO.

- TANTO eran gli occhi miei fissi ed attenti
A disbramarsi la decenne sete,
Che gli altri sensi m' eran tutti spenti;
4 Ed essi quinci e quindi avean parete
Di non caler, così lo santo riso
A sè traeali con l' antica rete;
7 Quando per forza mi fu volto il viso
Ver la sinistra mia da quelle Dee,
Perch' io udia da loro un : Troppo fiso.
10 E la disposizion ch' a veder ee
Negli occhi pur testè dal sol percossi,
Senza la vista alquanto esser mi fee;
13 Ma poi che al poco il viso riformossi,
Io dico al poco, per rispetto al molto
Sensibile, onde a forza mi rimossi,

CANTO XXXII.

MY eyes, that thirst to satisfy,
Which ten long years had made me dry,
 So fixedly were bent,
 All other sense was spent.
On this side and on that they were
Guarded by wall from other care,
 By her blest smile drawn in
 Its ancient net within :
But turned perforce was my regard,
When from those Goddesses I heard,
 That on my left were seen,
 A warning "not so keen".
And that affection of the sight,
New smitten by the sun-beam's light,
 Wrought so that I was left
 A while of sight bereft :
But when upon the lesser ray
My eyes were set (the less I say,
 Matched with that dazzling blaze,
 Whereon I might not gaze),

- 16 Vidi in sul braccio destro esser rivolto
Lo glorioso esercito, e tornarsi
Col sole e con le sette fiamme al volto.
- 19 Come sotto gli scudi per salvarsi
Volgesi schiera, e sè gira col segno,
Prima che possa tutta in sè mutarsi;
- 22 Quella milizia del celeste regno,
Che precedeva, tutta trapassonne
Pria che piegasse il carro il primo legno.
- 25 Indi alle ruote si tornar le donne,
E il grifon mosse il benedetto carco,
Sì che però nulla penna crollonne.
- 28 La bella donna che mi trasse al varco,
E Stazio ed io seguitavam la ruota,
Che fe' l' orbita sua con minore arco.
- 31 Sì passeggiando l' alta selva, vota,
Colpa di quella ch' al serpente crese,
Temprava i passi un' angelica nota.
- 34 Forse in tre voli tanto spazio prese
Disfrenata saetta, quanto eramo
Rimossi, quando Beatrice scese.

I saw upon the right hand wheeled
That glorious army take the field :
 Fronting the sun it came,
 Fronting the seven-fold flame.
As squadron, shielded 'gainst its foes,
Wheels round, and with its standard goes,
 Moved rank by rank throughout,
 Till all be turned about ;
Even so, that heavenly kingdom's host,
That went in front, our path had crossed,
 Ere yet the pole was bent,
 And the car forward sent.
Back to the wheels those ladies pressed :
The Grifphon moved his burden blest,
 Yet of his feathers all
 None stirred he therewithal.
Then she, who drew me through the flood,
And I, and Statius, took our road,
 By that wheel following,
 Which curves in lesser ring.
Through the high wood, now empty made,
(Her fault, whom serpent's guile betrayed)
 Our march was tempered all
 By notes angelical.
So far upon our way we had got,
As from loosed string an arrow shot
 Would in three flights have ended,
 When Beatris descended.

- 37 Io sentii mormorare a tutti: Adamo!
Poi cerchiaro una pianta dispogliata
Di fiori e d' altra fronda in ciascun ramo.
- 40 La coma sua, che tanto si dilata
Più, quanto più è su, fora dagl' Indi
Nei boschi lor per altezza ammirata.
- 43 Beato sei, Grifon, che non discindi
Col becco d' esto legno dolce al gusto,
Posciachè mal si torce il ventre quindi.
- 46 Così d' intorno all' arbore robusto
Gridaron gli altri; e l' animal binato:
Sì si conserva il seme d' ogni giusto.
- 49 E volto al temo ch' egli avea tirato,
Trasselo al piè della vedova frasca;
E quel di lei a lei lasciò legato.
- 52 Come le nostre piante, quando casca
Giù la gran luce mischiata con quella
Che raggia dietro alla celeste lasca,
- 55 Turgide fansi, e poi si rinnovella
Di suo color ciascuna, pria che il Sole
Giunga li suoi corsier sott' altra stella;

“Adam” I heard in murmured sound :
Then circled all a tree around,
 On every bough that there
 Was left despoiled and bare.
The top thereof, whose branching head
The higher it lifts, is wider spread,
 To Indians in their grove
 Of wondrous height would prove.
“O Griphon, blest art thou, that ne’er
“With beak that tempting tree wilt tear,
 “The taste whereof will make
 “The bowels sore to ache.”
So round the stalwart tree they cried :
And that twin-natured beast replied :
 “Yea, thus ye keep the seed
 “Of every righteous deed.”
And then the pole he turned about
Unto that widowed pine-tree’s foot,
 And left it fast thereto,
 Whereof afore it grew.
As, when the greater light down streams,
Joined with that constellation’s beams,
 Which follows in due line
 The heavenly Fish’s sign,
Our vegetation swells and thrives :
Each plant his proper tint revives ;
 Ere Sol hath yoked his car
 Beneath another star :

- 58 Men che di rose, e più che di viole
Colore aprendo, s' innovò la pianta,
Che prima avea le ramora sì sole.
- 61 Io non lo intesi, nè qui non si canta
L' inno che quella gente allor cantaro,
Nè la nota sofferse tuttaquanta.
- 64 S' io potessi ritrar come assonnaro
Gli occhi spietati, udendo di Siringa,
Gli occhi a cui più vegghiar costò sì caro ;
- 67 Come pittor che con esempio pinga
Disegnerei com' io m' addormentai ;
Ma qual vuol sia che l' assonnar ben finga.
- 70 Però trascorro a quando mi svegliai,
E dico ch' un splendor mi squarciò il velo
Del sonno, ed un chiamar: Surgi, che fai?
- 73 Quale a veder dei fioretti del melo,
Che del suo pomo gli Angeli fa ghiotti,
E perpetue nozze fa nel Cielo,
- 76 Pietro e Giovanni e Jacopo condotti
E vinti ritornaro alla parola,
Dalla qual furon maggior sonni rotti,

So did that tree a bloom disclose,
More bright than violet, less than rose,
 To deck the boughs, that were
 But now so stripped and bare.
I heard not, nor can here be chanted
The hymn that people there descanted :
 Nor could my sense o'erwrought
 Its music bear throughout.
Had I the power that sleep to tell,
At Syrinx' tale that erst befell
 Those cruel watching eyes,
 Which paid such sacrifice,
As limner then, to model keeping,
Would I depict my wondrous sleeping :
 But his the task more meet,
 Who can of slumber treat.
Wherefore I pass to when I woke,
And say how through sleep's curtain broke
 Light, and a voice that spake :
 " What dost thou here ? Awake ! "
As to that apple-blossom's sight,
Whose fruit fills the angels with delight,
 And in the Heavens' guest-hall
 Makes feast perpetual,
Peter and John and James were led,
And turned again, their faintness fled,
 At word, elsewhere that spoken
 Yet deeper sleep hath broken ;

- 79 E videro scemata loro scuola,
Così di Moisè come d' Elia,
Ed al Maestro suo cangiata stola ;
- 82 Tal torna' io : e vidi quella pia
Sopra me starsi, che conduttrice
Fu de' miei passi lungo il fiume pria ;
- 85 E tutto in dubbio dissi : Ov' è Beatrice ?
Ond' ella : Vedi lei sotto' la fronda
Nuova sedere in sulla sua radice.
- 88 Vedi la compagnia che la circonda ;
Gli altri dopo il Grifon sen vanno suso,
Con più dolce canzone e più profonda.
- 91 E se più fu lo suo parlar diffuso,
Non so, perocchè già negli occhi m' era
Quella ch' ad altro intender m' avea chiuso.
- 94 Sola sedeasi in sulla terra vera,
Come guardia lasciata lì del plaustro,
Che legar vidi alla biforme fiera.
- 97 In cerchio le facevan di sè claustro
Le sette ninfe, con quei lumi in mano,
Che son sicuri d' Aquilone e d' Austro.

And saw their fellows left alone,
Elias, yea, and Moses gone :
 Their Master as of yore,
 But changed the robe he wore.
Even so turned I : and at my side
I saw her stand, my kindly guide,
 Who late my steps had led
 Along the river's bed.
And all in doubt I said "O where
"Is Beatris?" : "Behold her there,
 "Set the tree's root upon,
 "Beneath its leaves new-grown.
"Behold" she said "her train attending ;
"The Griphon with the rest ascending ;
 "With song of sweeter sound
 "They rise and more profound."
And if her speech more full ran on,
I know not, for before me shone
 Her face, who from my thought
 Had all things else shut out.
Alone she sat on the bare sward,
As there the chariot left to guard,
 The same that erst I saw
 The twin-formed creature draw.
Circle-wise round her formed their band
Those seven nymphs, and in their hand
 The lights, which Auster's blows
 Fear not, nor Aquilo's.

- 100 Qui sarai tu poco tempo silvano,
E sarai meco, senza fine, cive
Di quella Roma onde Cristo è Romano ;
- 103 Però, in pro del mondo che mal vive,
Al carro tieni or gli occhi, e quel che vedi,
Ritornato di là, fa che tu scrive.
- 106 Così Beatrice ; ed io, che tutto ai piedi
De' suoi comandamenti era devoto,
La mente e gli occhi, ov' ella volle, diedi.
- 109 Non scese mai con sì veloce moto
Fuoco di spessa nube, quando piove
Da quel confine che più va remoto,
- 112 Com' io vidi calar l' uccel di Giove
Per l' arbor giù, rompendo della scorza,
Non che dei fiori e delle foglie nuove ;
- 115 E ferì il carro di tutta sua forza,
Ond' ei piegò, come nave in fortuna,
Vinta dall' onda, or da poggia or da orza.
- 118 Poscia vidi avventarsi nella cuna
Del trionfal veicolo una volpe,
Che d' ogni pasto buon pareva digiuna.

“ Here whiles provincial shalt thou be,
“ Thence everlastingly with me
 “ Thou unto Christ shalt come,
 “ A Roman of his Rome.
“ Wherefore, the naughty world to cure,
“ Mark well the chariot, and be sure
 “ Thou write, what here thou learn,
 “ When yonder thou return.”

So Beatris: and, for that aye
At her words' feet devout I lay,
 My eyes, my thoughts I made
 Turn thither where she bade.
With swifter motion ne'er hath broke
Forth from thick cloud the lightning stroke,
 When flashed from that confine,
 Which keeps remotest line,
Than there I saw Jove's bird descend
Right down upon the tree, and rend
 Its flowers, its new-grown leaves,
 Yea, and the bark he cleaves:
He smote the car with all his might,
That reeled as ship in evil plight,
 O'ercome by waves that beat
 From port, from starboard sheet.
I looked and lo! a she-fox came
Into that stately chariot's frame;
 So lean she seemed as spent
 Of all good nourishment.

- 121 Ma, riprendendo lei di laide colpe,
La Donna mia la volse in tanta futa,
Quanto sofferson l' ossa senza polpe.
- 124 Poscia, per indi ond' era pria venuta,
L' aquila vidi scender giù nell' arca
Del carro, e lasciar lei di sè pennuta.
- 127 E qual esce di cuor che si rammarca,
Tal voce uscì del cielo, e cotal disse:
O navicella mia, com' mal sei carica!
- 130 Poi parve a me che la terra s' aprisse
Tr' ambo le ruote, e vidi uscirne un drago,
Che per lo carro su la coda fisse:
- 133 E, come vespa che ritragge l' ago,
A sè traendo la coda maligna,
Trasse del fondo, e gissen vago vago.
- 136 Quel che rimase, come di gramigna
Vivace terra, della piuma, offerta
Forse con intenzion sana e benigna,
- 139 Si ricoperse, e funne ricoperta
E l' una e l' altra ruota e il temo, in tanto
Che più tiene un sospir la bocca aperta.

But now my Lady made attack
On her vile sins, and drove her back,
 And to such flight did turn,
 As fleshless bones might learn.
Then, lighting whence he came before,
Down on the car the eagle bore,
 And with his feathers bright
 He left its seat bedight.
And, as from heart distressed, a cry
I heard, that issued from the sky,
 “O dear-loved bark of mine,
 “What evil freight is thine!”
Then midway 'twixt the wheels the earth
Oped, and a dragon came to birth,
 And straightway with his tail
 Pierced through the chariot's mail.
And, as the wasp withdraws his dart,
So with his venomous tail a part
 From the car's floor he rent,
 And passed, on prey intent.
Then with that plumage, erst bestowed
Haply with purpose fair and good,
 The remnant, even as grain
 Spreads over fruitful plain,
Was clothed about, and clothed was all
The pole, and either wheel withal,
 In shorter space than sigh
 From open mouth goes by.

- 142 Trasformato così il dificio santo
Mise fuor teste per le parti sue,
Tre sopra il temo, ed una in ciascun canto.
- 145 Le prime eran cornute come bue;
Ma le quattro un sol corno avean per fronte:
Simile mostro visto ancor non fue.
- 148 Sicura, quasi rocca in alto monte,
Seder sopr' esso una puttana sciolta
M' apparve con le ciglia intorno pronte.
- 151 E, come perchè non gli fosse tolta,
Vidi di costa a lei dritto un gigante,
E baciavansi insieme alcuna volta:
- 154 Ma perchè l' occhio cupido e vagante
A me rivolse, quel feroce drudo
La flagellò dal capo infin le piante.
- 157 Poi, di sospetto pieno e d' ira crudo,
Disciolse il mostro, e trassel per la selva
Tanto, che sol di lei mi fece scudo
- 160 Alla puttana ed alla nuova belva.

When so transformed that fabric blest,
With heads through all its parts 'twas dressed :
 Three on the pole, and one
 At every corner stone.
The first were oxen-horned : the four
Each but one horn on forehead bore :
 Like monster ne'er hath been
 By mortal vision seen.
Safe-throned, as fort on mountain's crown,
Meseemed a strumpet sate thereon,
 Her raiment loose, her eyes
 Round glancing eager-wise.
Guarding her, lest from him she fly,
I saw a giant stand thereby :
 And for a while the twain
 Kissed ever and again.
But when her roving lustful glance,
To look on me, she turned askance,
 Her mate with ruffian zeal
 Lashed her from head to heel.
Then he, to jealous rage a prey,
The monster loosed and dragged away
 Into the wood, whose shield
 Whore and strange beast concealed.

CANTO TRENTESIMOTERZO.

DEUS, venerunt gentes, alternando

Or tre or quattro, dolce salmodia

Le donne incominciaro, e lagrimando :

4 E Beatrice sospirosa e pia

Quelle ascoltava sì fatta, che poco

Più alla croce si cambiò Maria.

7 Ma poichè l' altre vergini dier loco

A lei di dir, levata dritta in piè,

Rispose, colorata come fuoco :

10 *Modicum, et non videbitis me,*

Et iterum, Sorelle mie dilette,

Modicum, et vos videbitis me.

13 Poi le si mise innanzi tutte e sette,

E dopo sè, solo accennando, mosse

Me e la Donna, e il Savio che ristette.

CANTO XXXIII.

"O GOD, the heathen are come in"

Weeping those ladies did begin,

Alternate four and three

Chanting sweet psalmody.

Thereat, with sighs from pity wrung,

Beatris hearkened as they sung,

As Mary's changed her face,

At cross when she had place.

But when their maiden minstrelsy

Ceased, and gave place to her reply,

Erect she rose to speak,

Flushed red as flame her cheek.

"A little while," she said *"and here*

"Ye shall not see me, Sisters dear :

"A little while again,

"And ye shall see me plain."

In front of her the seven she sent :

I and that dame behind her went,

With that remaining shade,

Moved but by sign she made.

- 16 Così sen giva, e non credo che fosse
Lo decimo suo passo in terra posto,
Quando con gli occhi gli occhi mi percosse;
19 E con tranquillo aspetto: Vien più tosto,
Mi disse, tanto che s' io parlo teco,
Ad ascoltarmi tu sie ben disposto.
22 Sì com' io fui, com' io doveva, seco,
Dissemi: Frate, perchè non ti attenti
A domandarmi omai venendo meco?
25 Come a color, che troppo reverenti
Dinanzi a' suoi maggior parlando sono,
Che non traggon la voce viva ai denti,
28 Avvenne a me, che senza intero suono
Incominciai: Madonna, mia bisogna
Voi conoscete, e ciò ch' ad essa è buono.
31 Ed ella a me: Da tema e da vergogna
Voglio che tu omai ti disviluppe,
Sì che non parli più com' uom che sogna.
34 Sappi che il vaso che il serpente ruppe,
Fu, e non è; ma chi n' ha colpa, creda
Che vendetta di Dio non teme suppe.

So went she on: and scarce, I ween,
Set earthward her tenth pace had been,
 When from her eyes a stroke
 Upon my eyes there broke:
And with calmed aspect "Come" said she
"Nearer, that if I speak with thee,
 "Thou shalt be posted, where
 "My word thou best may hear."
When, even as duty bade, I brought
Me near, "Why, brother, hast not sought
 "With questioning to try me,
 "And keep thee ever by me?"
As who before their elders stand
Abashed, nor speak at their command:
 But faints their voice, nor may
 Unto the teeth find way:
Such case was mine; with broken speech
I said "My lady, you can reach
 "Unto my need, and well
 "What that befits can tell."
And she to me, "I will that thou
"From fear, from shame, disveil thy brow,
 "And speak no more as one
 "With dreaming weighed upon.
"Know that the bowl the serpent broke,
"Was and is not: but let him look,
 "The blame thereof that bears,
 "God's wrath no potion fears.

- 37 Non sarà tutto tempo senza ereda
L' aquila che lasciò le penne al carro,
Per che divenne mostro e poscia preda ;
40 Ch' io veggio certamente, e però il narro,
A darne tempo già stelle propinque,
Sicure d' ogni intoppo e d' ogni sbarro ;
43 Nel quale un cinquecento diece e cinque,
Messo da Dio, anciderà la fuia
Con quel gigante che con lei delinque.
46 E forse che la mia narrazion buia,
Qual Temi e Sfinge, men ti persuade,
Perch' a lor modo lo intelletto attua ;
49 Ma tosto fien li fatti le Naiade,
Che solveranno questo enigma forte,
Senza danno di pecore o di biade.
52 Tu nota ; e, sì come da me son porte,
Così queste parole segna ai vivi
Del viver ch' è un correre alla morte ;
55 Ed abbi a mente, quando tu le scrivi,
Di non celar qual hai vista la pianta,
Ch' è or due volte dirubata quivi.

“Not for all time of heirs bereft
“Shall be that eagle, he who left
 “His plumes the car to array,
 “A monster, now a prey.
“I see, and tell thee certainly,
“A constellation drawing nigh,
 “That may not be opposed,
 “Nor e’er by barrier closed.
“When a five hundred, ten and five,
“Shall, messenger from God, arrive,
 “And with her sinful mate
 “Shall slay the runagate.
“Haply ’twill be my sentence dark
“As Sphinx or Themis fails its mark:
 “And like their riddles writ
 “Shall baffle all thy wit:
“Yet soon the facts shall Naiads be
“And this enigma solve for thee,
 “At lesser cost than grain
 “Blighted, or cattle slain.
“Note thou: and as from me thou hear,
“My words unto the living bear,
 “Whose life hath yet to run,
 “Nor unto death hath won.
“And when thou write, remember well
“What in thy sight the tree befell,
 “How once again its sheen
 “By robber spoiled hath been.

- 58 Qualunque ruba quella, o quella schianta,
Con bestemmia di fatto offende a Dio,
Che solo all' uso suo la creò santa.
- 61 Per morder quella, in pena ed in disio
Cinquemili' anni e più, l' anima prima
Bramò Colui che il morso in sè punio.
- 64 Dorme lo ingegno tuo, se non estima
Per singular cagione essere eccelsa
Lei tanto, e sì travolta nella cima.
- 67 E se stati non fossero acqua d' Elsa
Li pensier vani intorno alla tua mente,
E il piacer loro un Piramo alla gelsa,
- 70 Per tante circostanze solamente
La giustizia di Dio nello interdetto
Conosceresti all' arbor moralmente.
- 73 Ma perch' io veggio te nello intelletto
Fatto di pietra, ed, impietrato, tinto
Sì che t' abbaglia il lume del mio detto,
- 76 Voglio anco, e se non scritto, almen dipinto,
Che il te ne porti dentro a te, per quello
Che si reca il bordon di palma cinto.

“For whoso robs or whoso rends
“With overt blasphemy offends
 “God, who the tree created
 “To his use consecrated.
“Five thousand years the firstborn soul
“His tasting rued, in pain, in dole,
 “Thirsting for Him who came
 “Himself to bear the shame.
“Thy wit must be asleep, if thou
“Canst not the special reason know,
 “Which raised the tree so high,
 “And set its top awry.
“And were not thy vain thoughts around
“Thy mind as Elsa’s water bound,
 “Their pleasure staining thee
 “As Pyramus mulberry,
“Thou by such circumstance alone
“Shouldst of God’s justice here have known
 “The moral meaning hidden
 “Within the tree forbidden.
“But, since I see all petrified
“Thy sense, and with such colour dyed,
 “My speech may ne’er aright
 “Reach to thy dazzled sight,
“Still, if not writ, yet painted there,
“Shalt thou my word within thee bear,
 “Like to the palm-leaves wound
 “The pilgrim’s staff around.”

- 79 Ed io: Sì come cera da suggello,
Che la figura impressa non trasmuta,
Segnato è or da voi lo mio cervello.
- 82 Ma perchè tanto sopra mia veduta
Vostra parola disiata vola,
Che più la perde quanto più s' aiuta?
- 85 Perchè conoschi, disse, quella scuola
Ch' hai seguitata, e veggi sua dottrina
Come può seguitar la mia parola ;
- 88 E veggi vostra via dalla divina
Distar cotanto, quanto si discorda
Da terra il ciel che più alto festina.
- 91 Ond' io risposi lei: Non mi ricorda
Ch' io straniassi me giammai da voi,
Nè honne coscienza che rimorda.
- 94 E se tu ricordar non te ne puoi,
Sorridente rispose, or ti rammenta
Come bevesti di Letè ancoi ;
- 97 E se dal fummo fuoco s' argomenta,
Cotesta oblivion chiaro conchiude
Colpa nella tua voglia altrove attenta.

And I: "As wax that changeth not
"The impress that from seal it got,
 " So doth your word remain
 " Imprinted on my brain.
"But wherefore from my sight so high
"Doth your long looked for teaching fly?
 " Why doth your helpful rede
 " Fail at my greatest need?"
" 'Tis that thou mayst" she said "intend
"The school thou keptst, and comprehend,
 " How ill its doctrine might
 " Follow my word aright:
"And see your path from path divine
"At greater distance than the line
 " Betwixt earth and the heaven
 " Round highest circle driven."
I answered her: "It may not be
"That I was e'er estranged from thee,
 " Nor can I feel the smart
 " Of conscience prick my heart."
"And if the past thou hast forgot,"
Smiling she said "recall'st thou not
 " How lately thou hast quaffed
 " Of Lethe's opiate draught:
"And as smoke argues fire, even so
"Doth thy forgetting clearly show
 " 'Tis in thy will the blame,
 " Misturned to other aim.

- 100 Veramente oramai saranno nude
Le mie parole, quanto converrassi
Quelle scoprire alla tua vista rude.
- 103 E più corrusco, e con più lenti passi,
Teneva il sole il cerchio di merigge,
Che qua e là, come gli aspetti, fassi,
- 106 Quando s' affisser, sì come s' affigge
Chi va dinanzi a gente per iscorta,
Se truova novitate a sue vestigge,
- 109 Le sette donne al fin d' un' ombra smorta,
Qual sotto foglie verdi e rami nigri
Sopra suoi freddi rivi l' Alpe porta.
- 112 Dinanzi ad esse Eufrates e Tigri
Veder mi parve uscir d' una fontana,
E quasi amici dipartirsi pigri.
- 115 O luce, o gloria della gente umana,
Che acqua è questa che qui si dispiega
Da un principio, e sè da sè lontana?
- 118 Per cotal prego detto mi fu: Prega
Matelda che il ti dica; e qui rispose,
Come fa chi da colpa si dislega,

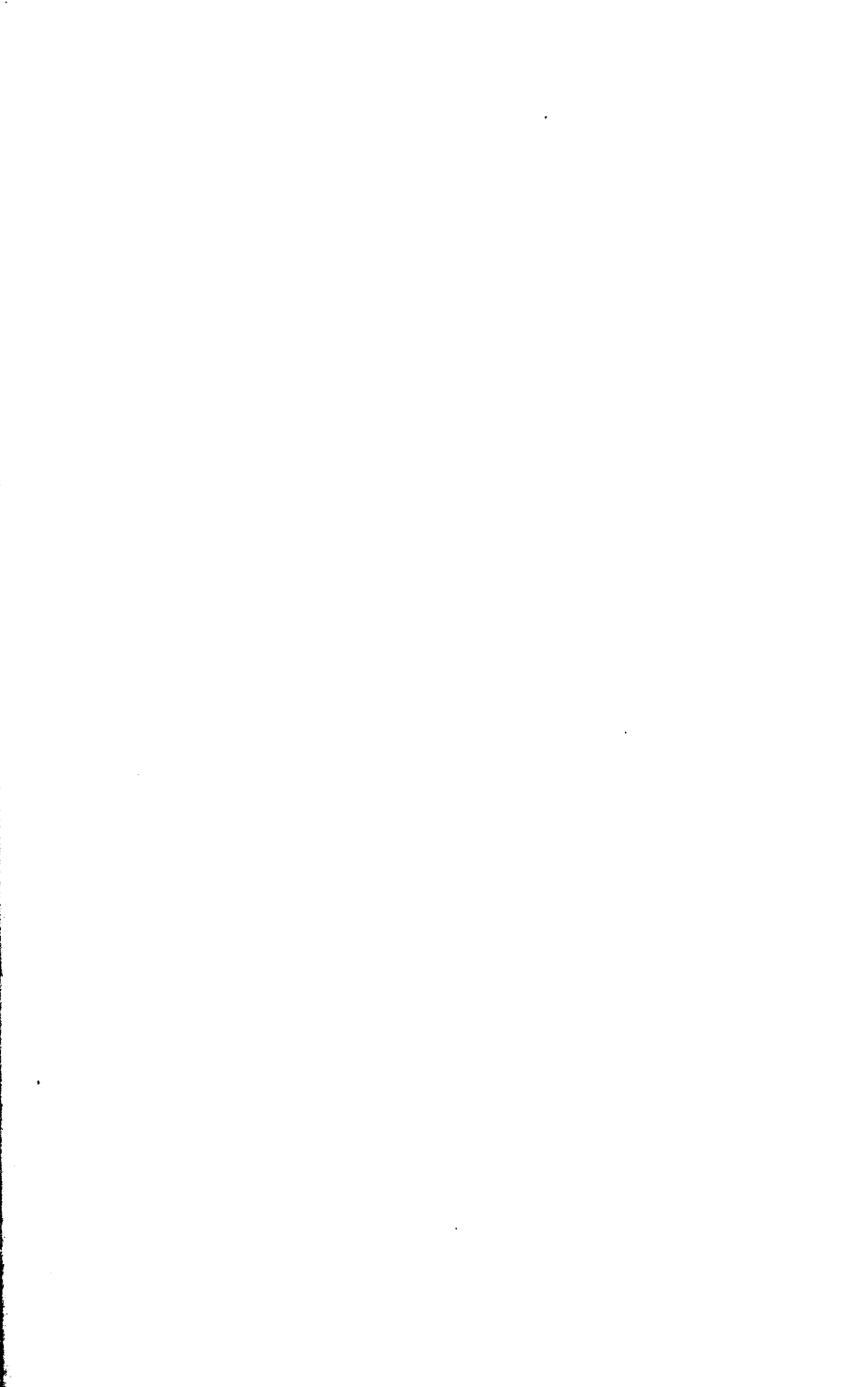
“Yea, but henceforth in naked wise
“My words shall come, and to thine eyes
 “Disclose such meed of light,
 “As fits untutored sight.”
The sun more bright, with slackened pace,
Kept that meridian circle’s place,
 Which will, now here, now there,
 Whence-as you look, appear;
When stayed them, even as he will stay,
Who leadeth convoy on their way,
 Whene’er before his feet
 Aught strange he chance to meet,
Those ladies seven, where ends such shade
Pale, as on Alp’s cold streams is laid,
 Green leaves and branches black
 O’ershadowing their track.
Before them, from one fount it seemed
That Tigris and Euphrates streamed:
 Thence slowly drew aside,
 As friends from friends divide.
“O light, O glory of mankind,
“What wave is this that here we find,
 “Forth from one source up-starting,
 “And from itself departing?”
“Ask thou Matilda” to my prayer
’Twas answered: and that lady fair,
 As one that makes defence
 To charge of negligence,

- 121 La bella Donna: Questo, ed altre cose
Dette gli son per me; e son sicura
Che l' acqua di Letè non gliel nascose.
- 124 E Beatrice: Forse maggior cura,
Che spesse volte la memoria priva,
Fatta ha la mente sua negli occhi oscura.
- 127 Ma vedi Eunoè che là deriva:
Menalo ad esso, e, come tu sei usa,
La tramortita sua virtù ravviva.
- 130 Com' anima gentil che non fa scusa,
Ma fa sua voglia della voglia altrui,
Tosto ch' ell' è per segno fuor dischiusa;
- 133 Così, poi che da essa preso fui,
La bella Donna mossesi, ed a Stazio
Donnescamente disse: Vien con lui.
- 136 S' io avessi, lettor, più lungo spazio
Da scrivere, io pur canterei in parte
Lo dolce ber che mai non m' avria sazio;
- 139 Ma perchè piene son tutte le carte
Ordite a questa Cantica seconda,
Non mi lascia più ir lo fren dell' arte.

Her answer made: "He hath been taught
"All this and more beside: and naught
 "In Lethe's wave, I ween,
 "Forgotten can have been."
And Beatris: "Mayhap it be
"Some greater care his memory
 "Hath dimmed, and rendered blind
 "The vision of his mind!
"But yonder look to Eunoe's fount:
"Bring him thereto, and as thou art wont,
 "His fainting power restore,
 "And bid it live once more."
As noble soul, that leaves excuses,
And for his will another's chooses,
 Soon as it shall appear,
 By outward sign made clear;
Even so on me that fair one laid
Her hand, and moved along, and said
 (As might high dame beseem)
 To Statius "Come with him."
If longer space were mine to write,
Reader, I would some part indite
 On that sweet draught that may
 My thirsting ne'er allay:
But since all covered are the quires
This second canticle desires,
 My course must here be reined,
 By law of art refrained.

142 Io ritornai dalla santissim' onda
Rifatto sì, come piante novelle
Rinnovellate di novella fronda,
145 Puro e disposto a salire alle stelle.

Back turned I from that wave most blest,
Fresh, as fresh plant with fresh leaves dressed,
Prepared, all clean from cares,
To mount unto the stars.



ERRATA IN VOL. I

PURGATORY (CANTOS I-XXVII)

PAGE

- 8, line 75, put full stop for comma at end of line.
15, line 18, *for* 'Oh' *read* 'Oh!'
32, line 30, add full stop at end of line.
34, line 38, add comma at end of line.
35, line 22, omit full stop at end of line.
39, line 1, add comma after 'creep.'
41, line 5, omit inverted commas at beginning of line.
43, line 18, add comma at end of line.
44, line 141, *for* 'pregghi' *read* 'priegghi'.
51, line 14, add full stop at end of line.
66, line 59, omit comma at end of line.
 line 70, *for* 'pregghi' *read* 'priegghi'.
68, line 81, add full stop at end of line.
 line 86, put comma in place of full stop.
95, line 24, *for* 'is' *read* 'be'.
96, line 67, add comma at end of line.
98, headline, add full stop after VII.
125, line 21, add comma after 'point'.
136, line 24, put semicolon at end of line in place of comma.
154, line 78, *for* 'lui' *read* 'loro'.
176, line 131, *for* 'trova' *read* 'truova'.
181, line 1, omit comma at end of line.
197, line 1, omit comma at end of line.
 line 18, *read* 'accurséd'.
198, line 40, omit comma at end of line.
 line 50, *for* 'trova' *read* 'truova'.

PAGE

- 219, line 6, *for* 'appeased,'" *read* 'appeased',
 line 25, *for* 'she,' *read* 'she';
- 231, line 2, add colon at end of line.
 line 10, *for* 'befel' *read* 'befell'.
- 232, line 60, *for* 'coperto' *read* 'covertò'.
- 234, line 3, add full stop at end of line.
- 235, line 2, put colon at end of line in place of full stop.
- 236, line 104, add comma at end of line.
- 239, line 8, *for* 'are' *read* 'be'.
- 245, line 26, add comma after 'queen'.
- 247, line 21, add comma after 'press'.
- 249, line 27, omit comma at end of line.
- 250, line 80, add semicolon at end of line.
- 263, line 25, *for* 'deriven' *read* 'derives'.
- 286, line 137, add comma at end of line.
- 290, line 5, *for* 'Lochi' *read* 'Luoghi'.
- 296, line 73, *for* 'esce solo, e' *read* 'esce, e solo'.
- 306, line 14, add comma after 'subito'.
- 324, line 44, *for* 'pentémi' *read* 'pente' mi'.
- 335, line 1, *for* 'save' *read* 'gave'.
- 368, line 24, *for* 'disso' *read* 'disse'.
- 380, line 3, put full stop at end of line in place of comma.
- 382, line 18, put full stop at end of line.
 line 33, put full stop at end of line in place of colon.
- 395, line 4, *for* 'veuil' *read* 'vueil'.
- 398, line 18, *for* 'gia' *read* 'già'.

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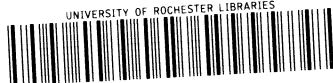
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